

Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

26

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community



Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as)



AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY

United States of America

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in 207 countries in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjab province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (The Mahdi and Messiah).

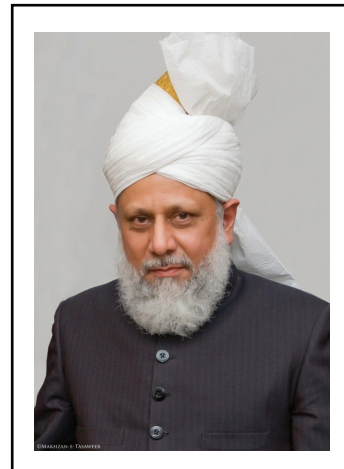
The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam – peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God – in its pristine purity.

Hazrat Ahmad (as) proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: “The religion of the people of the right path” (The Holy Qur'an: 98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon Qura'nic teaching:

“There is no compulsion in religion” (The Holy Qur'an: 2:257).

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

The Community has been headed by his elected successors. The present Head of the Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khlaifatul Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah(as).



Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul Masih V (aba)

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The Muslim Sunrise

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Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (ra) was the first Ahmadiyya Muslim missionary to arrive in America. In 1921, he founded the Muslim Sunrise, which stands today as the longest running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics relating to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever-changing global society. It provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues and presents their solutions from an Islamic perspective.

The Muslim Sunrise welcomes letters to the Editor, Questions and Submissions.

Email us at MuslimSunrise@Ahmadiyya.us
or go online to www.MuslimSunrise.com



Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

- sa: Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)
as: 'Alaihis-Salam (may peace be upon him)
ra: Radhi-Allahu 'Anhu/'Anha (may Allah be pleased with him/her)
rh: Rahimahullahu Ta'ala (may Allah shower His mercy on him)
aba: Ayyadahullahu Ta'ala Bi-Nasrihil-'Aziz (may Allah support him with His mighty help)

Verse numbers in the references from the Holy Qur'an count Tasmiya at the beginning of a chapter as the first verse.

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Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer *alaihis salaam* or 'may peace be upon him', and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *radhi-Allaho anhu/a* or 'may Allah be pleased with him/her.' While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text for readability, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

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Editorial (07)

Poetry Corner (40)

Thanks for Allah's Beneficence

News, Views & Reviews (41)

From the Archives (46)

Islamic Conception of God
Muslim Sunrise Vol. XIV, First Quarter, 1942, No. 1

Questions and Answers (48)

Does Allah Belong to you?
Who is Allah the Almighty?



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In This Issue

- In the Words of the Promised Messiah (as)** 8
Two Types of Divine Attributes: Immanent and Transcendental
Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khaza'in
- Allah is *Al-Lateef*: The Incomprehensible** 9
Summary of Friday Sermon delivered by
Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul
Masih V (aba) on April 17, 2009
- Al-Ahad*: The One and *Al-Wahid*: The Lord of Unity** 12
Arifa Haleem
- Al-Khaliq*: The Creator** 15
Hidayatullah Ahsan
- Rahmaniyyat and Rahimiyyat*: Two of God's Greatest Attributes** 18
Anser Ahmad
- The Day of Judgement** 21
Rizwan Khan
- Al Mujeeb*: The Answerer of Prayers** 23
Fazal Masood and Farhan Khokhar
- As-Salam*: The Source of Peace** 26
Tooba Khokar
- As-Salam*: The Source of Peace** 27
Mubasher Ahmad
- Al-Hayy*: The Living** 31
Amtul Kafi Yadullah Bhunnoo
- Al-Hakeem*: The Wise, The Creator With A Purpose** 33
Zia H. Shah MD
- Al-Wali*: The Friend** 36
Khalida Jamilah
- An-Nur*: The Light** 38
Seher Bhatti

FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ١

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا ۚ وَذُرُوا الَّذِينَ
يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ ۚ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧٨١﴾

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ﴿٦﴾

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۚ يُسَبِّحُ
لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٥﴾

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

“And to Allah alone belong all perfect attributes. So, call on Him by these attributes.”
The Holy Qur'an, (7:181)

Allah — there is no God but He. His are the most beautiful names.
The Holy Qur'an, (20:9)

He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.

The Holy Qur'an, (59:25)



HADITH

SAYINGS OF THE

PROPHET

MUHAMMAD (sa)

Hadith about the Attributes of Allah

Prophet Muhammad (sa) said,

"Allah has ninety-nine names, i.e., one-hundred minus one, and whoever knows them will go to Paradise."

(Sahih Bukhari, Vol: 50, Hadith 894)

Abu Hurairah (ra) reported Allah's Messenger (sa) as saying: There are ninety-nine names of Allah; he who commits them to memory will get into Paradise. Verily, Allah is Odd (He is One, and it is an odd number) and He loves odd numbers."

(Sahih Muslim, Book 48, Hadith 5)

EDITORIAL

FALL 2019

Different faith traditions call upon God with diverse names, such as Elohim, Yahweh, Paramatma, Zeus, Jah, Nagai, and Waheguru. God, in all religious beliefs, also has numerous attributes, and each Divine attribute is glorified with a different name. In Islam, His name is Allah. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah has numerous 'Beautiful Names,' each name stands for one of His magnificent characteristics, reflecting a different and unique aspect of Divinity. For the present issue of the Muslim Sunrise, we have chosen the important theme of "Divine Attributes of Allah."

Judgment). Then, throughout the Qur'an, His attributive names are revealed in specific Qur'anic contexts. Some Divine attributes are unique to God alone, and cannot be applied to anyone else. For example, He is ***al-Hayy*** (Ever-Living), ***al-Khabeer*** (Omniscient – All-Knowing), ***al-Qayyum*** (Self-Subsisting), ***al-Lateef*** (Incomprehensible), ***Al-Muqtadir*** (Omnipotent – brings to pass anything He chooses), and ***as-Samad*** (Besought of all, and upon Whom all depend for their needs). Some of God's attributes reflect His relationship with His Creation, especially human beings, such as, ***al-Wadud*** (The One Who Loves), ***as-Shafi*** (The Healer), ***al-Mutakallim*** (Who speaks to His servants) and ***al-Hadi*** (The Guide). Other names express God's responsive attitude towards various good or evil actions carried out by human beings; for example, ***al-Ghaffar*** (The Great Forgiver), ***al-Mu'izz*** (The Bestower of honor), ***al-'Adl*** (The Just), ***at-Tawwab*** (The Acceptor of repentance) and ***ad-Darr*** (The Inflictor of punishment).

As it was not possible to cover all the “Beautiful Names” of God in one issue of the Muslim Sunrise, , only a few of the Divine attributes are selected. These include God being One, the Creator, the Compassionate and Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment, the Light, the Source of Peace, the Ever-living, the Wise, the Answerer of Prayers, the Friend and All-Sufficient.

Enjoy reading the articles, and please send us your feedback.

At the very beginning of the Holy Qur'an, in Surah Al-Fatihah (Chapter 1), are mentioned four principal Divine attributes : (i) **Rabb al-'Alamin** (Lord of the worlds), (ii) **Rahman** (The Compassionate), (iii) **Rahim** (The Merciful), and (iv) **Malik-e-Yaum ad-Din** (Master of the Day of

Mubasher Ahmad
Editor-in-Chief

IN THE WORDS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH(as)

Two Types of Divine Attributes: Immanent and Transcendental (1).

God Almighty has set out in the Holy Qur'an two aspects of His attributes to bestow perfect understanding upon His humble creatures. First, He has described His attributes metaphorically as resembling some human qualities. For instance, He is Noble, Merciful, and Beneficent. He can be angry as well as loving. He has hands and eyes, legs, and ears. He has been creating throughout eternity, though nothing has been eternally co-existent with Him. However, species have long existed, and even that is not essential for the operation of His attribute of creation, for though creation is one of His attributes, the manifestation of His Unity and Singleness at certain times is also a part of His attributes. None of His attributes falls into permanent disuse, but a temporary cessation of its operation is permissible. Thus God manifested His attributes of resemblance to man. For instance, God is Creator, but to some degree, man also creates or fashions; and man can be called noble for, up to a point, he possesses the quality of nobility; and man can be called merciful for, up to a point, he possesses the quality of mercy. He also has the quality of anger, and he has eyes and ears, etc. This could create suspicion in one's mind that man resembles God in respect to these attributes, and God resembles man. Therefore, God, by contrast, has also mentioned in the Holy Qur'an His attributes of transcendence, i.e., such attributes of which man does not partake at all in his being or his qualities. God's creation is not like man's creation, nor is God's mercy like man's mercy, nor is His wrath like man's anger, nor is His love like man's love, nor is He in need of space like man. The Holy Qur'an sets out clearly that in His attributes God is quite distinct from man. For instance, it is said:

"Nothing, in essence, shares its substance or attributes with God. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing" (2).
At another place it is said:

"Allah –there is no god save Him, the Living, the

Self-Subsisting, and All-Sustaining. Slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep. To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that dare intercede with Him save by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He pleases. His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and care of them wearies Him not; and He is the High, the Great" (3).

The meaning and explanation of this is as follows True Being and True Existence and all true qualities belong only to God and that no one is an associate with Him in respect of them. He alone is alive in His Being, and all others are alive through Him. He exists in His Being, and everything else exists through His support. He is not subject to death, so also He is not subject to even temporary cessation of His senses like sleep or slumber; but others are subject to death, sleep and slumber. All that you see in the heavens or the earth belongs to Him and manifests itself and exists through Him. No one can intercede with Him without His permission. He knows all that is before or behind people, that is, His knowledge comprises that which is manifest and that which is hidden. No one can encompass any part of His knowledge except that much which He permits. His power and His knowledge encompass the heavens and the earth. He supports all and nothing supports Him. He is not wearied by supporting the heavens and the earth. He is above all weakness and feebleness and lack of power.

References:

1. Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 23, pp. 273-274
2. The Holy Qur'an (42:12)
3. The Holy Qur'an (2:256)



Allah is *Al-Lateef*: The Incomprehensible

[Summary of Friday Sermon delivered by
Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul
Masih V (aba) on April 17, 2009]

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) delivered his Friday Sermon on the subject of the Divine attribute of *al-Lateef* (the Incomprehensible, the Knower of all subtleties, the Benign).

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) said according to the lexicon, "*Lateef*" is a kind and gracious being, it is one of the Divine attributes and as such it connotes One Who is Benevolent to His creation as well as One Who is Aware of all subtle and incomprehensible matters. According to various commentators, "*al-Lateef*" is One Who illumines hearts, Who makes arrangements for physical and spiritual nourishment and Who offers His friendship to His servants at times of tribulation. Also, One Who is most Benign in matters of accountability, Who acknowledges good but covers weakness, Who accepts small sacrifices and recompenses them with great reward, makes good the matters for one whose affairs are troubled and One Who understands the subtleties of matters.

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah the Exalted states: "Eyes cannot reach Him, but He reaches the eyes. And He is the Incomprehensible, the All-Aware" (1).

Elucidating on this verse, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (as), said that sight, intellect, and consciousness cannot reach God – it is impossible to try and see Him. He is "*al-Lateef*," He is Unseen; indeed, Whoever He reaches He illumines that person to such an extent that the person speaks for Him, and this blessing is mostly granted to the Prophets of God and was given

above all to the Holy Prophet (sa). However, those around him who lacked insight were deprived of benefiting from his beneficence. Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) said one does not require worldly astuteness, education or status to witness the light of God. Rather, God Who is the Knower of all subtleties and is All-Aware to those who truly look for His light and have a real longing to seek Him. He makes arrangements that people who seek Him to see the light of the Prophets. Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) said if one's longing is sincere then by virtue of His attributes, God Himself guides His servant. His light is manifested through His Prophets as they spread the light of the Unity of God all around them. Among all the Prophets of God, the Holy Prophet (sa) disseminated this light the most, for it was he who had the most perfect perception of God, and it was he who was completely imbued in the colors of God. In the current age, because of his perfect and complete devotion and subservience to the Holy Prophet (sa) God granted this light to the Promised Messiah (as).

Today the Word of God fulfills those who purify their hearts and wish to seek God in the true sense and accept the Imam of the Age. Such people are then enabled to witness God's manifestations every day. Indeed in this age it is the Promised Messiah (as) alone, who, by virtue of his subservience to the Holy Prophet (sa), can lead one to the Unity of God. Expounding upon the above verse, he said that the Being of God is incomprehensible and no one can discover Him through the intellect. One may realize the reality of the Unity of God only after one has

abandoned all false deities, external and internal. Such are the obstacles that impede one in reaching God. However, God is al-Lateef and also All-Aware, and His light enters pure hearts. He knows what is in the inner recesses of hearts; therefore, God's light will not reach a heart that is filled with false deities.

The Holy Qur'an states: "And he raised his parents upon the throne, and they all prostrated before God for him. And he said, "O my father, this is the fulfillment of my dream of old. My Lord has made it true. And He bestowed favor upon me when He took me out of prison and brought you from the desert after Satan had stirred up discord between me and my brethren. Surely, my Lord is Benignant to whomsoever He pleases; for He is the All-Knowing, the Wise" (2).

Here, Hazrat Yusuf(as) is mentioning God's favors by virtue of His attribute of **Al-Lateef** (the Benign) and is recalling how God was his Friend while his brothers conspired against him. He is acknowledging that at the time he has worldly status, again by virtue of God's attribute of **Al-Lateef** in that He has rewarded him as well as his father immensely for their sacrifice. God is the Friend of His true servants in all trials and tribulations, He enabled Hazrat Yusuf (as) and his father to remain steadfast, and as they were both dear to God and were granted His nearness, the other brothers were also able to reform themselves. The subject-matter that unfolds is that through prayer the opportunity to reform others arises and the closer the person who prays for another's reformation the more it is accepted. The Holy Prophet (sa) prayed for his Ummah, even when people of some towns persecuted him, he prayed for them, hoping for their reformation. We too need to pray for the Muslim Ummah today so that God may purify their hearts and enable them to accept the truth.

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) said that Almighty Allah has mentioned in the Holy Qur'an: "Hast thou not seen that Allah sends down water from the sky and the earth becomes green? Allah is indeed the Knower of subtleties, the All-Aware" (3).

He explained that here God states that by virtue of His attribute of **Al-Lateef** it must be remembered that life originates with water and to attain spiritual life one needs to focus on the Unity of God Who possesses all powers. The metaphor of water from the sky connotes

that just as rainfall makes the earth and the soil verdant, similarly when the spiritual water comes down, it facilitates the spiritual development of people. Physical rainfall falls on all land, but this does not result in rocks and deserts to bloom. Similarly, the spiritual water only benefits those who are pure and those who have a glimmer of goodness in them. This sheds light on the fact that water is a sign of life and when it falls on the earth, the soil flourishes and as a result of this, the living creatures also benefit. However, rainfall does not result in rocky surfaces and deserts to bloom, although the living creatures that inhabit the area benefit from the rainfall. Spiritual water enables pure hearts to develop, and while pure hearts bear fruits due to such water, those opposing them also have worldly benefits from spiritual water. The material benefit to stone-hearted people is akin to the current situation wherever our Community is progressing; the opponents are trying to reap political and financial benefit. They have had the material advantage from the advent of the Promised Messiah (as).

God sends spiritual water when there are signs of a near-death state in people. At a time of intense spiritual darkness, He sent the Holy Prophet (sa) with the perfect religion and Shariah through which the earth flourished. Later in accordance with His prophecy and after a thousand years of darkness that followed, God sent His true and ardent devotee so that he may revive the faith and may take the light to those hearts who had a true and sincere longing to seek the light. Indeed, the Knower of all subtleties, God, knows who it is that seeks Him.

Allah states in the Holy Qur'an: "Allah is exquisitely kind to His servants. He provides for whom He pleases. And He is the Powerful, the Mighty" (4).

In the verse above, God states that it is He Who reaches the eyes [of people] and that He sends spiritual water. God states that He is exquisitely kind to His servants and provides all manner of provisions, and only those truly benefit from this who, in conjunction with seeking material provisions, also seek spiritual provisions. Covering the faults and failings of His servants, forgiving their errors, He enables those who seek the spiritual water to recognize His light. By citing His attribute of being Powerful in the above verse, attention is drawn that He also meets justice and that the ultimate triumph is His and those whom He sends and worldly opposition can never extinguish this light. This is one of God's many decrees,

and it is inevitable. The stability of the world is in trying to seek beneficence from the Divine attribute of *al-Lateef* and not be deprived of this blessing.

Currently the general situation in Pakistan is very bad, so prayers should be offered for that. In the eyes of the world, it is as if most of the terrorism is from Pakistan. The news coverage informs us that there is indeed great disorder in the country. For Pakistani Ahmadi Muslims, the situation is twice as bad, and they are suffering due to this. Whenever, wherever they have an opportunity, they are harming Ahmadi Muslims. Everyone is aware of the case of the four youngsters who were arrested on false charges. No effort to secure a bail for them has come to fruition yet. Many others are also imprisoned. Also, many treacherous conspiracies are hatched against us – at times with the involvement of the government. At an event at the Badshahi Mosque [Lahore] recently, a federal minister was present when extremely unseemly words were used for the Promised Messiah (as). The government seems to have joined the mullahs against the Ahmadi Muslims and has thus created a very perilous situation. He urged that a lot of prayers should be offered

for the protection of the life and property of each Pakistani Ahmadi Muslim from all evil. Pakistani Ahmadi Muslims have always prayed, they should continue to do so and Ahmadi Muslims all over the world should also pray for them.

Similarly, there are surges of persecution in India and Indonesia. Currently, elections are being held in these countries. Prayers should be made for fair and just governments to come to power. In Kazakhstan, Ahmadi Muslims are also being harassed by governmental organizations; prayers are needed for them as well.

May God bestow each Ahmadi Muslim all over the world with His grace and may they all receive the beneficence of the attribute of *al-Lateef*. Ahmadis should pray, may Allah keep everyone protected.

References:

1. The Holy Qur'an (6:104)
2. The Holy Qur'an (12:101)
3. The Holy Qur'an (22:64)
4. The Holy Qur'an (42:20)

Al-Ahad: The One and Al-Wahid: The Lord of Unity

Arifa Haleem

The Supreme Being created this universe for the manifestation of His Majesty and Glory but kept Himself hidden and veiled from the eyes of His creation. He inculcated an urge in the human mind and soul to know their True Creator who is the Only One Absolute Being without any partner or associate.

He assigned man as His vicegerent and equipped him with reason, intuition, as well as other capabilities to differentiate between right and wrong, and told him to worship the Lord of Unity, glorify Him and seek His Pleasure through complete submission to His will, thus fulfilling his assigned purpose in this universe.

The human journey started with the first prophetic call of Hazrat Adam (as), and it was the declaration of the existence of One God. After Hazrat Adam (as) the history of the next generations reveals that all the Messengers of God carried the same message of the 'Oneness' of God, but from time to time people deviated from the right path. It was hard for them to believe in the One Unseen God. They wanted material proof of His Existence and insisted on seeing Him with their own physical eyes. When a Subtle and Unique Being could not be visible to them, under the influence of awe-inspiring objects of nature they started worshipping trees, the sun, the moon and stars, trees, or whatever attracted them and looked powerful. God Almighty warned them through His Messengers and numerous Signs to worship the Omnipotent, Gracious, Merciful, Absolute and One Single God, Who is not only the Creator but the Destroyer too, but even after repeated warnings when they did not listen. Ultimately, they were destroyed like the nations of Sodom and Gomorrah.

All the previous sacred Scriptures give evidence of One God who is Singular and Independent, but the influence of materialism and other temporary attractions polluted the ignorant human minds, and they went far away from their True Creator. But even in the dark times of worshipping self-created idols, those who were True Believers in Tauhid (Oneness of God) did not falter in their faith and

remained firm in their belief.

Today the followers of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam believe in the concept of Monotheism i.e., One God who is Infinite and Eternal. The followers of these religions may differ in their opinions and interpretations, but they know very well that all roads lead to one destination: that destination is the Lord of Unity.

Christianity asserts the Oneness of God but at the same time advocates in the Holy Trinity: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, i.e., God is one in essence and three in persons. Christians believe in compound unity. In this regard, the Holy Bible says, "For there is One God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1).

Another Biblical verse states "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (2).

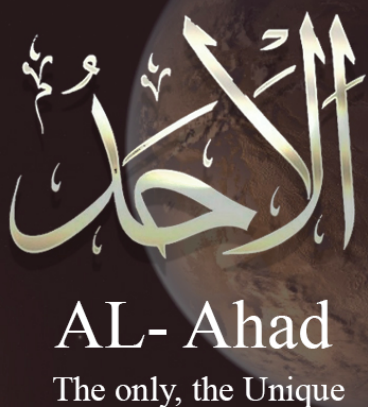
Jews believe in One God called YHWH, the God of Israel, who is Absolute, One, Personal and Transcendent. He is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Through the Prophet Moses (as), He delivered the Israelites from slavery and gave them His Law in the form of Ten Commandments.

In the Holy Bible, it is stated, "This is what the Lord says, Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first, and I am the last, apart from Me there is no God." (3).



In Islam, the entire faith of Muslims rests on the doctrine of the Unity of God who is Absolute and Indivisible. Because God Himself is Absolute Unity, He likes unity in His Creation so that harmony and goodness should prevail. He is Unitarian and Universal and possesses infinite attributes; He manifests to humanity through 99 of these main attributes. In the Muslim world there is no concept of Godhead. He is Unique, and nothing can be compared with Him. He is Eternal, Infinite, Omnipotent Omniscient, and Omnipresent, to name but a few attributes, but this Beautiful Being is beyond the comprehension of the mere human mind. Reasoning plays a large part in knowing the Supreme Power, but occasionally, when it fails, intuition comes forward and plays its role. He is neither matter nor spirit, but something quite different that cannot be compared to anything of the Universe. He can only be recognized through His attributes, signs, intuition, and Divine knowledge given to the Messengers through the angels.

He is "*al-Ahad*" as well as "*al-Wahid*". About His being "*al-Ahad*" God makes it clear in the Holy Qur'an, "Say, He is Allah, the One; 'Allah, the Independent and Besought of all. He begets not, nor is He begotten; 'And there is none like unto Him'" (4).



God is *Al-Ahad* and *Al-Wahid*, and both the attributes refer to the Oneness of God.

"*Al-Ahad*" means He is unique and matchless in attributes. His Oneness is incalculable, numerically speaking. He is One and has no father, mother, son, or any other associate. "*Al-Wahid*" also refers to the Oneness of God. In essence and by nature He is a Unique entity and Singular without any helper or partner. His Oneness in the sense of Wahid is

described in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an: "Verily, Allah is the One Only God. Far is it from His Holiness that He should have a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth" (5).

The foundation of Muslim belief is built on monotheism and associating partners with the Oneness of God (shirk) is strictly forbidden. Shirk is a form of practicing idolatry and whether it is open or concealed, major or minor, it is a major and unforgivable sin.

In the same way, one's ego i.e., pride in one's self, is also a form of shirk. It is also shirk when instead of pleasing God and having firm faith in His Mercy and Graciousness, man, starts pleasing other resourceful people for his own pleasure, benefit and gains. He falters in his faith and starts running towards fake divinities, pirs (spiritual guide), faqirs (religious mendicant), and forgets his True Creator who is the real Sustainer, Compassionate, All-powerful and Resourceful. Man forgets that his Creator is a Living God (*Al-Hayy*) and is always there for all His creation: He listens to them, talks to them and takes care of them.

It is not only the people of previous generations but even now in this present era, people go on asking questions about the existence of the Supreme Being. God Almighty eradicates their doubts by saying in the Holy Qur'an, "And when My servants ask thee about Me, say, I am near. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he prays to Me. So, they should harken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way" (6).

The Lord of Unity created a diverse universe, but within this diversity, He likes to have unity and harmony. For the promotion of peace and harmony He revealed the Holy Qur'an that comprises complete guidance, warnings, and commands for the unity and well-being of all of humanity for all time. Among His Signs, the cosmos is an example of beautiful unity in diversity. Intellect, as well as intuition, reveal that there is a Supreme Mover and Ultimate Cause who is moving each celestial body in its assigned orbit, otherwise deviation from it will cause destruction. Every blade of grass, a tiny insect, and all living and inanimate objects of natural creation are manifest and brilliant examples of One Supreme, Unique and Single Power that is working behind them.

Sir Isaac Newton wrote that this most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets could only proceed from the

counsel and domain of an intelligent and Powerful Being (7).

Referring to the existence and working of a supreme power, Dr. Irving William Knoblauch Professor of Natural Sciences, Michigan State University U. S. A., says: "I believe in God ---because I do not think mere chance could account for the emergence of the electrons and protons or for the first brain. I believe in God because to me Divine Existence is the only logical explanation for the things as they are" (8).

The monotheistic concept of Islam is against polytheism or pantheism because these ideologies associate partners with the Absolute One God. In pantheism, there is no distinction between God and Universe. Every object is identified with Him. Polytheism is belief in many gods. Each of them will have his own plan and course of action to rule the universe. The conflicting mode of action will create chaos and affect the harmony of the universe.

In this regard, the Holy Qur'an states, "If there had been in them (the heavens and the earth) other gods besides Allah, then surely both would have gone to ruin. Glorified then be Allah, The Lord of the Throne above what they attribute" (10).

The Lord of Unity, the Unique and Singular Being, the Ultimate Cause of all the things is a Beautiful Great Mystery that is beyond the understanding of the human mind. He seems to be living far away, but He is so close to man that whenever man calls Him, He listens and answers him and knows all his open and secret actions. He is the All-Knowing, All-Powerful, Gracious and Merciful Absolute Being.

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Al-Khaliq: The Creator

Hidayatullah Ahsan

There are three ways one may study attributes of Allah:

1. The attribute by itself,
2. With other attributes, and
3. Its manifestation in human beings.

In this article, we shall present Allah's attribute 'al-Khaliq' in each of these ways. The word Khaliq is translated as 'Creator'; however, it is mostly understood as 'Maker' – probably because these words are synonyms. According to the Oxford dictionary, the word 'create' is used for bringing something into existence from nothing. We use the word 'make' for bringing something into existence from other things. For example, we make bread and not create bread.

Al-Khaliq has its roots in the word 'khalq', which is used for creating, designing and planning, i.e., Allah brings into existence something from nothing, hence He is the designer and planner (1). Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) has explained this as follows: "According to the lexicons, the root word khalq has the following meanings: To take proper measure before creating something; to create something from nothing without copying any prior design, and to make something from another or to invent something. To create from nothing is a quality that exclusively belongs to Allah" (2). This is to say that Allah is al-Khaliq (The Creator) and al-Bari (The Maker).

The Creator and The Designer

The Holy Qur'an calls Allah the Creator of the heavens and earth and of everything in between (3,4). He conceived everything and put forward a plan for everything. Clearly, what we create is per His design and His Divine plan.

We rely on our senses to experience and understand the world, and these senses are limited in understanding Allah and His attributes. However, Allah

does provide us with examples in this world that we may use to understand Him, in our limited way. One such example is water; the element of life. All life depends on water: we cannot survive for long without it. Allah has created the earth's ecosystem to ensure distribution of water. This intricate system is too vast to discuss in a short article; therefore, my focus will be on rain.

Most of the water on earth is seawater which contains salts and minerals, and cannot be used without purification. The sun's heat causes water to evaporate and starts a purification process. The water vapors defy gravity and rise to the heavens, where they condense and make clouds. The changes in the atmosphere move the clouds throughout the world. Precipitation occurs when clouds reach an area of a certain temperature (5).

The Holy Qur'an says, "And He it is Who sends the winds as glad tidings before His mercy, till, when they bear a heavy cloud, We drive it to a dead land, then We send down water therefrom, and We bring forth therewith fruits of every kind. In like manner do We bring forth the dead that you may remember" (6).

Allah also says in the Holy Qur'an: "We sent down water from the sky according to measure, and We caused it to stay in the earth — and surely it is We Who determine its taking away" (7).

The process of water purification and distribution is designed to ensure that the Earth is self-sufficient in water, i.e., this is the second part of Allah's plan. As Allah says: "We caused it to stay in the earth" all of which points to His design.

The Creator and The Planner

The above mentioned verse of the Holy Qur'an also illustrates another aspect of al-Khaliq – the Planner. The words 'plan' and 'design' are synonyms; however,

according to the Oxford dictionary, the word 'plan' is used for making arrangements to achieve an objective. One of Allah's objectives was to create life on Earth – as is evident by our existence. This verse shows us many steps of this plan; however, I shall only discuss the first step of bringing water to Earth.

There are competing theories about the origin of water on Earth; however, these theories start from the Big Bang. In the early moments of the Big Bang, copious amounts of hydrogen was created, which is one of the elements for water molecules, and is the primary element of the stars. Complex elements, such as oxygen are created when a star dies in a spectacular explosion called a Supernova (8). A bond between two hydrogen and one oxygen atoms creates a water molecule. This implies that the plan for creating water was in place and in play before there was any sign of the planet earth.

One of the theories about the origin of water suggests that the Earth's water has extra-planetary sources, i.e., the water on our planet came from outside of the planet. It suggests that heavenly objects such as meteorites or comets may have been the source of water as evident by an isotope, present both on earth and in water-bearing meteorites and comets (9).

This research is in line with explaining Allah's plan that He has brought water for us from the sky, i.e., through meteorites and comets. The above mentioned verse (7) shows that the al-Khaliq is not only the Creator, but the Designer and the Planner as well.

The Creator and The Originator

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) said in his Friday sermon that in Arabic, 'khalq' means to create something from nothing or using no prior design (2). This means that there was nothing but Allah before He created something – because if there was something, then the design would have existed. This means that Allah originated creation as well.

The Qur'an also expresses this in the following way: "He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a thing, He does only say to it, 'Be!' and it is" (10).

This verse also points to His attribute al-Khaliq, as The Designer and as One who has all knowledge; He has

only to say: 'Be' and He knows that it will be.

The Qur'an mentions this attribute of Allah along with other attributes.. In these instances, we learn that Allah abides by the responsibilities of The Creator. He provides for all His creation. As He says in the Holy Qur'an, "And We placed thereon high mountains, and gave you sweet water to drink" (11), and "So eat of the lawful and good things which Allah has provided for you; and be grateful for the bounty of Allah, if it is Him you worship" (12).

He bestows mercy upon His creation, which is mentioned at the beginning of every chapter in the Qur'an, in Al-Fatiha (13), and in many other places in the Qur'an.

'The Creator' in Other Religious Texts

All attributes of Allah are important; however, without



al-Khaliq, there would be nothing. This is expressed in other religious texts as well. For example, this is explicitly mentioned in the first verse of the Bible states: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (14). Some translations of the Bible use Elohim instead of God as it is a common Hebrew name for Allah and it is usually translated in English as Father, God, or God the Creator (15).

In Gita, Allah tells Arjuna that the best way to understand Him is by understanding His creation. He says, "Know Me to be the creator of all creation, O Arjuna. The true understanding of both the creator and the creation is considered by Me to be the transcendental or metaphysical knowledge" (16).

Humans are Creative

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah says, "So when I have fashioned him in perfection and have breathed into him of My Spirit, fall ye down in submission to him" (17).

This means that He gifted us a share of His attributes. al-Khaliq is one of the easiest to identify in human beings as He has made us creative.

Since the beginning of time, we have invented, used our curiosity to discover elements, plants, and other living

creatures. We have created tools to investigate the depths of the seas and the heights of the skies. We have devised methods to cultivate lands, breed and kill beasts much larger in size.

Some people may say that they are not the particularly creative. This self-assessment is not correct, and a small experiment can be used to show that all humans are creative. Grab a couple of pens and blank sheets of paper and sit down with a friend. Give one of the pens and paper to your friend. Start a two-minute timer and draw each other before the timer expires. The rule is that you and your friend cannot talk to each other, nor may you giggle.

When the timer expires, share your drawings with each other and do not worry about the quality of your art. The point is not to see who drew the best picture; rather, the participants of this experiment created something new out of nothing. The paper you used for drawing each other was blank and now has a likeness of the participants drawn on it. This experiment shows us that Allah has blessed all humans to create.

Oh, and you may start talking to each other now.

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Rahmaniyyat and Rahimiyyat: Two of God's Greatest Attributes

Anser Ahmad

"When a window is facing the sun, and the window is opened, the sun's rays enter. Similarly when a person turns his or her attention towards God, the Supreme, and there is no intervening screen between them and God, then at once, a luminous flame descends on that person and illumines them and dispels all inner uncleanness" (1).

The first verse of the Holy Qur'an reads, "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful" (2). In this verse alone are stated, two of God's greatest attributes. Fourteen hundred years ago, Allah revealed through the Holy Qur'an that He was ar-Rahman (the Gracious), and ar-Rahim (the Merciful).

According to Islamic teachings, these two attributes of Allah have vast and deep meanings. The attribute of **ar-Rahman** (the Graciousness of God) refers to all inanimate and animate creations that exist. Whatever exists in the sky, such as the sun, moon, stars, rain, and air, and whatever exists on earth, such as rivers, trees, fruits, medicines, animals, etc., are all manifestations of Allah's Rahmaniyyat (Graciousness). These are not the result of anything created by man. It is in reference to this that the Holy Qur'an states, "The Rahman taught the Qur'an" (3).

The true worshippers of Allah not only appreciate Allah's Graciousness, but they strive to embody some aspects of this attribute of Rahman. They are those who walk humbly upon the earth, and when the ignorant ones address them harshly they reply to them with words of peace and compassion. They offer kindness in place of harshness, and in return for abuse, they pray for their revilers, and thus they exhibit gracious (Rahmani) qualities. Just as our Gracious God bestows the bounties of the sun, the moon, the earth, and other countless favors upon all of His creatures regardless of whether they are good or bad, we as humans can embody some aspect of this attribute in ourselves. If we behave in a way where we are bountiful in our giving, without expecting anything in return, if we exhibit unending

kindness towards both those who behave well towards us and to those who do not, we can achieve some aspects of Rahmaniyyat (mercy) in our behavior.

Allah's Rahmaniyyat is for all of His creation, but His Rahimiyyat is Reserved only for Humans.

While the attribute of Rahmaniyyat applies to God's creation of the universe, to celestial bodies, and all creatures on earth, His attribute of Rahimiyyat is limited to humans. As God has not bestowed on other animals the ability to pray, they can never be recipients of God's Rahimiyyat.

The attribute of Rahimiyyat is mentioned in several passages of the Holy Qur'an. For example, it states: "Allah is Rahim (Merciful) towards the believers" meaning that the disbelievers and the rebellious are not able to benefit from this attribute (4). The Holy Qur'an never states that He has reserved Rahmaniyyat (Graciousness) only for the believers. The special mercy that is reserved for the believers has been called Rahimiyyat every time. In another verse of the Holy Qur'an, we are told: "The Mercy of Allah is for those who do good" (5).



Therefore, to become the recipient of God's Mercy (Rahimiyat), special effort, exertion, purification of heart, prayer, and supplication towards Allah are necessary. It is only the one who earnestly seeks this grace who will receive it. God is called Rahim, the all-Merciful, when accepting the prayers and supplications and righteous actions of people. He safeguards them against calamities, misfortunes, and waste of effort. Those who strive in the way of Allah, and keep away from every type of darkness and mischief are the benefactors of this attribute. Therefore, Rahim requires something of man for him to benefit: a striving through worship and prayer. Rahim urges man to acknowledge his weakness and to rely on his Creator in hope and expectancy. The attribute forces man to bow to Allah in utmost humility, in a state between fear and hope, and affirm that it is only through the help of Allah, that he can achieve his goals.

The Blessing of Khilafat is an Example of Allah's Rahimiyyat

Regarding Allah's attribute of Rahimiyyat (Mercy), Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, explains:

"Allah showers His support on them at the time of their striving and helps them with His spirit by His clemency and grants them peace of mind and sends down on them perpetual tranquility. Next, He determines to show them a sample of the Day of Requit, and He confers on them sovereignty and Khilafat" (6).

Khilafat, therefore, is a blessing that emanates from Allah's attribute of Rahimiyyat. In the Holy Qur'an, it states, "Allah had promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors from among those who were before them" (7).

The Holy Qur'an does not state that Khilafat is for all of humanity regardless of whether they believe or do not believe in God, but instead, Allah the Supreme, declares that He has reserved Khilafat only for those who "believe and do good works." Hence Khilafat is an example of Allah's attribute of Mercy, as it is limited to those who fulfill the requirements.

It is also by virtue of Allah's Rahimiyyat that He is displeased when humans do not seek His help. A Hadith

relates that "Allah's wrath befalls one who does not pray to Him and does not seek help from Him." If we go no further than appreciating Allah's quality of Rahmaniyyat, then we limit ourselves from seeking our daily needs from Allah. It is through His quality of Rahimiyyat that we turn to Allah for something as minor as asking for a shoe-lace, or salt for our food.

Therefore, Allah's Mercy is directly linked to man's supplicating for help through prayer. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, states, "Whosoever makes prayer obligatory on themselves, meets Allah, the Friend, Who is hidden behind the screens of invisibility, and such a person is delivered from doubt and uncertainty. His days become bright, his words shine like pearls, his face becomes refulgent like a full moon and his station is elevated" (8).

He goes on to say, "prayer indeed attracts the grace that saves us and is named Rahimiyyat, impelling man towards continuous progress. It is through this grace that a true worshipper reaches the stage in which Allah becomes his guardian, his faith. And man reaches the state where he believes in Allah with such certainty as if he sees Him with his own eyes" (9).

Truly Experiencing Allah's Attributes of Rahman & Rahim Requires Annihilation of the Ego

In Surah Al-Fatihah, Allah, the All-Mighty, has placed the phrase: "We worship Thee alone" before the phrase "We implore Thy help," so that we are reminded of His Graciousness before asking for His Mercy. Therefore we first thank our Creator by saying: "Lord, we thank Thee for Thy bounties with which Thou has favored us," then we pray for our needs. In the phrase, "We worship Thee alone," Allah urges His servants to first place utmost effort in obeying His commandments, as this is the highest level of worship and appreciation of Allah's Rahmaniyyat. The verse is then followed with, "We seek Thy help and protection," invoking the attribute of Rahimiyyat. What are we seeking protection against? First and foremost, it is against our pride and self-esteem. The Qur'anic position is that the ego is a barrier which prevents the communion between God and His servant. Once the ego is removed from the heart of individuals, they can perceive the Divine reality that pervades the universe. The primary aim of Surah Fatihah in inculcating the attributes of Rahman and Rahim is to make us humble and to elimi-

nate our egos so that we may experience Divine reality. This is the purpose of our existence.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) states, "Whoso makes himself lowly before Allah in Prayer will find that God makes kings humble before that person and makes such a slave, a master. Therefore, while the attributes of Rabb and Rahman make a person feel that there could be a God when we pray to Allah, we are blessed with the attribute of Rahim, in that Allah blesses our prayers and our endeavors" (10).



As the stars appear stage by stage, similarly God's attributes appear to us stage by stage. Man is sometimes under the shadow of the Divine attributes of Glory and Self-Sufficiency, and sometimes he is under the shadow of His attributes of Beauty. That is indicated in the Holy Qur'an: "Every day He reveals Himself in a new state" (11). Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) explains that in Surah Al-Fatihah, Allah the Supreme, is saying:

"O My servants, regard yourselves as corpses and seek strength from Allah. Let not a youth take pride in his vigor, nor an old one rely on his staff, nor a wise one feel elated with his intelligence nor a scholar trust in the accuracy of his knowledge, nor let a recipient of Divine revelation depend for support on his inspiration and revelation and the fervor of his prayers. Allah does what He pleases, rejects whom He pleases and admits among His chosen ones whom He pleases" (12).

When the moon faces the sun, it receives light from the sun, but when it starts moving away it grows darker and darker. The same is true of man. So long as he is prostrate

at His portal, believing himself to be utterly dependent on his Creator, then Allah raises him up and bestows His grace on him. But when the man begins to rely on his own strength, he is humiliated (13). That is why, in the Holy Qur'an, we are commanded to "Keep company with the righteous" (14).

Rahman and Rahim Remind Us That We Are One Community of Believers

After the attributes of Rahman and Rahim are mentioned in the first half of Surah Al-Fatihah, the believer does not then recite, "I beg the help of Thee." This would imply only self-preference which is inconsistent with righteousness. Instead the next two verses are, "Thee alone do we worship, and Thee alone do we implore for Help." Why is the believer taught to pray in the first-person plural and not in the singular?

It is because a righteous person includes all humankind in his prayer. In this Surah, Allah, the Supreme, has instructed the use of the first-person plural, conveying that this prayer is for the benefit of all of one's fellow brothers and sisters, and not only for the benefit of the person praying. Thus Allah urges the Muslims towards mutual accord, unity and love and requires that a supplicant should put himself to hardship for the promotion of his brother's welfare as he would put himself to hardship for the promotion of his well-being and should concern himself with and strive to meet his brother's needs just as he is concerned with and strives to meet his own needs. It is as if Allah, the Sublime, is commanding: O My servants, give one another gift of prayer as brothers and friends exchange gifts, and widen the scope of your prayers and your motives and your aims, making room in them for your brethren and become like brothers.



The End Goal of Islam

When we were children, we enjoyed watching cartoons and eating candy. But when we became teenagers, our preferences changed, and as we matured further into adults, our tastes continued to develop. Spiritual growth is similar. When the love of Allah is instilled in one's heart, the entire world begins to appear as if it were a childish playground, and we continue to evolve until God's Beauty becomes our primary joy.

It is through an unending growth in our understanding of Allah's attributes, beginning with His attributes of Rahman and Rahim, that we start to experience Allah's Divine Beauty. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) states, "When a person experiences those Divine attributes which constitute Allah's Supreme Beauty, his faith is strengthened beyond measure, and he is drawn towards God as iron is drawn towards a magnet. His love for God increases manifold, and his trust in God becomes very strong. Having experienced that, all his good is in God, his hopes in God are strengthened...his supplications proceed from the fountain of power and certainty, and his resolve becomes extremely firm and unshakable. In the end, having observed Divine favors and bounties, the light of certainty enters with great force into him, and his ego is altogether consumed. On account of the frequent contemplation of the Greatness and Power of God, his heart becomes the House of God (15).

"The Holy Spirit surges inside him all the time, and he speaks under the instruction of this very Spirit. Verities and insights flow out of him, and the tent of the Lord of Honor and Majesty is ever set in his heart. The delight of certainty, sincerity, and love flows through him like water, whereby every limb of his is nourished. His eyes exhibit the brightness of nourishment, and his forehead reveals it. His countenance appears as if it had been washed by the rain of Divine love and his tongue partakes fully of this freshness. All his limbs exhibit a brightness, as after a spring shower an attractive freshness is revealed in the branches, leaves, flowers and the fruits of trees" (16).



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The Day of Judgement

Rizwan Khan

Allah Almighty defines the “Day of Judgement” in the Holy Qur’an as: “And what should make thee know what the Day of Judgment is! Again, what should make thee know what the Day of Judgment is?! The day when a soul shall have no power to do aught for another soul! And the command on that day will be Allah’s” (1).

The primary application of the attribute Master of the Day of Judgement is in the Hereafter, when we can no longer disobey Allah. As long as we are in this world, Allah Almighty has given us the freedom to disobey Him if we choose and we are not prevented from doing so, and it is only for the Hereafter that “the command on that day will be Allah’s.” On that day in the Hereafter, the disbelievers will be punished for their disobedience.

However, there are times when Allah Almighty punishes disbelievers for their disobedience in this world. There are times when the manifestation of Master of the Day of Judgement appears in this world, and “the command on that day will be Allah’s” is witnessed in the present. These are the times when God Almighty sends a prophet to the world.

Explaining the attribute “Master of the Day of Judgement,” Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, (ra) the Second Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, writes, “A second meaning of “Master of the Day of Judgement” is that Allah Almighty is the Master of the time of religion. A subtle aspect of the laws of nature has been described in this.

Generally, Allah Almighty interacts with the world according to the ordinary laws of nature. However, when the foundation of religion is being laid, Allah Almighty manifests His attribute of Mastery. Those people who are not familiar with the details of the attributes of Allah Almighty think that the laws of nature are being broken. They see a helpless individual who stand before the world and makes a claim. Everyone opposes him, but even though all apparent means are against him, he

prevails. In many instances, such events happen as a result of prayers and miracles that, seeing them, the world is astonished. In reality, the wisdom of these events is that, when Allah Almighty begins a spiritual movement, or when He establishes the foundation of a religion, He does not manifest His attribute of Kingship as much as He especially manifests His attribute of Mastery. Leaving ordinary laws, He manifests His special laws instead, which are reserved for His chosen ones. At that time, such occurrences come about which seem extraordinary. This practice of God Almighty manifests itself at the time of every prophet. In this chapter (Surah Fatihah), we have been told that the same thing will happen in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (sa). Allah Almighty will help the Prophet Muhammad (sa) by extraordinary events that will seem to go against the laws of nature. This will be evidence that this age is the time of the establishment of religion and that the Prophet Muhammad (sa) is a true prophet of God” (2).

Whenever Allah Almighty sends a prophet, it is decreed that he will succeed. Although, according to the ordinary laws of nature, that person should have been destroyed by the opposition that he faces, however, “Allah has decreed: ‘Most surely I will prevail, I and My Messengers.’ Verily, Allah is Powerful, Mighty” (3).

It is based on this decree that prophets of God have boldly challenged their opponents to try their very best to destroy their mission.

“And recite unto them the story of Noah, when he said to his people, ‘O my people, if my station with God and my reminding you of your duty through the Signs of Allah offend you — and in Allah do I put my trust — muster then all your designs, you and your ‘partners’; then let not your course of action be obscure to you; then carry out your designs against me and give me no respite” (4). In ordinary circumstances, it would be seen as madness for a person, who already has seemingly impossible obstacles against him, to prophesise that his cause will

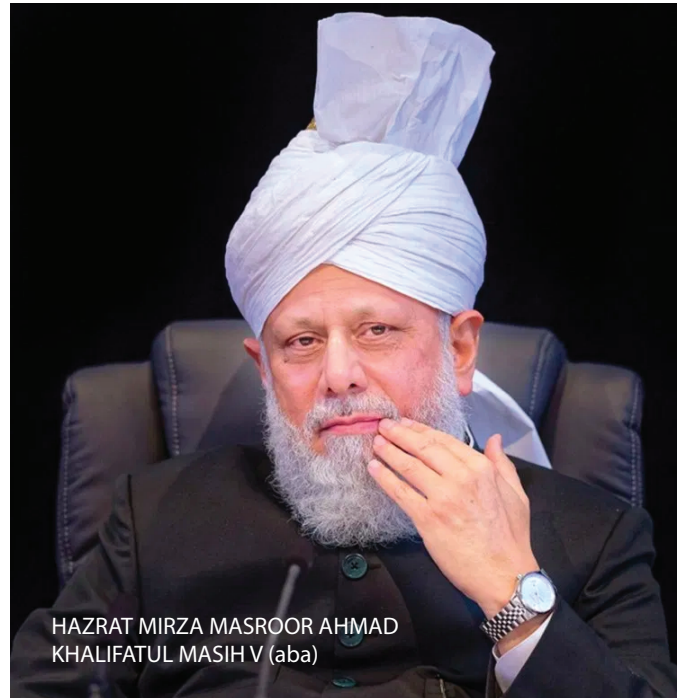
be victorious. It would be seen as suicidal for him to challenge his opponents, who are bent on destroying his cause, to spare no expense in opposing him. However, when prophets are under God Almighty's attribute of Master of the Day of Judgement and their era is deemed as a type of Day of Judgement, then they have no fear of any opposition.

When the mission of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) seemed to be on the brink of destruction at the hands of the disbelievers, he announced: "He, it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the Religion of truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions, even if those who associate partners with God hate it" (5).

When the opponents of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) were making repeated attempts to assassinate him, and his position was one of great vulnerability, he (sa) announced the revelation he received from God Almighty, "And Allah will protect thee from men" (6). The conviction of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) was so great that he was being guarded until this verse was revealed. After that, he said to those who were guarding him, "O you, people! Go away, for Allah shall protect me" (7). Although many attempts were made on his life, and he found himself in dangerous positions on the battlefield time and time again, this promise of God was bound to be fulfilled no matter what.

The time of the Promised Messiah (as) was also a time of the manifestation of the attribute Master of the Day of Judgement. When the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community made his claim, Hindus, Christians, and Muslims stood against him in severe opposition. It was at that time when he was alone and without any worldly support that he prophesied the inevitable victory of his mission and challenged his opponents, saying, "God Almighty has singularized me with His lights, which He bestows only on His chosen servants, and which cannot be equaled by others. If you have any doubts, come forth in opposition to me" (8).

The era of Khilafat that we are living in now is also an extension of that Day of Judgement about which Allah Almighty says that "the command on that day will be Allah's." The Khulafa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community have repeatedly prophesied that those who attempt



HAZRAT MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD
KHALIFATUL MASIH V (aba)

to destroy Khilafat and the Ahmadiyya Movement, whether they be religious organizations or governments, they will be destroyed by Allah Almighty. Although according to the normal laws of nature, this community should have been destroyed long ago, however, under the attribute of Master of the Day of Judgement, God Almighty has decreed punishment in this world for anyone who seeks to destroy Khilafat.

The primary application of Master of the Day of Judgement is in the Hereafter when we can no longer disobey Allah. However, when God Almighty sends a prophet to the world, then He manifests this attribute in this world, and many events are seen where disbelievers are punished for their disobedience.

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Al Mujeeb: The Answerer of Prayers

Fazal Masood Malik and Farhan Khokhar

An earthquake of magnitude 7.8 hit the Polynesian Kingdom of Tonga in the early hours of May 4, 2006. Its epicenter was located 800 kilometers southeast of Fiji, 32 kilometers below the seafloor, where the Pacific Plate and the Australia-India plate come together. The tremors lasted over 45 seconds. The Pacific Tsunami Centre immediately generated a tsunami alert to Fiji, New Zealand, and as far as Australia. The threat to life was real. Shortly after the tremors were felt in Tonga, a man of God, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) arrived at the Aqsa mosque in Nadi – a small town on the west coast of Fiji - and was apprised of the situation. The beloved Imam led the Fajr prayers that morning and remained in prostration for a much longer period. He prayed fervently before Allah, the Mujeebud Dua (the Answerer of Prayers), and after the prayers, he gave the good news: "There is nothing to fear, God Almighty will surely help. Nothing will happen."

The attribute of al-Mujeeb was in seen in full glory as Allah had heard the prayers of His servant and answered them in a powerful manner. The faith-inspiring manifestation of the Master of the universe, the eternal living God, came into being, and in about two hours, the news was received that: "a miracle has occurred, the tsunami has stopped dead in its tracks" (1).

The reversal of an impending disaster was nothing short of a miracle. A miracle brought about by the prayers of a man of absolute faith and who today is one of the closest to Allah the Almighty.

The absolute belief in the being of God with complete conviction is the pinnacle of faith; it is this belief that Allah invites us to achieve. It is this belief that is most apparent in the lives of all prophets (as). Not because they have a special language that is elusive to the rest of us, but because of the completeness of their belief. Nowhere is this belief more apparent than in the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (sa). One of the most significant incidents that astonishes the mind is that of the Battle of Badr.

Camped on the dry, solid grounds of Badr, away from the stream that flowed in a mystic rhythm, the Meccans were in an excellent position to fight the Muslims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) advanced towards the stream, camping for the night. The land adjacent to the stream was all sand and unsuitable for battle.

On one side stood over 1,000 skilled Meccan warriors, on the other, 313 mostly unskilled and untrained Muslims who were suddenly thrust into a dangerous battle. The anxiety among the Muslims was palpable. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) also shared this anxiety. It was the most vulnerable moment for Muslims in the short history of Islam. Nothing less than the survival of Islam was at stake. The Holy Prophet (sa) retreated to his tent and began his supplications. As the night progressed, his powerful supplications could be heard across the camps. "O my Allah," cried the Messenger, "over the entire face of the earth at this moment, there are only these three hundred men who are devoted to You and determined to establish Your worship. O my Allah, if these three hundred men die today at the hands of their enemy in this battle, who will be left behind to glorify Your name?"

Muslims gained their strength through the constant supplications of the Holy Prophet (sa). By dawn, came the verdict from Allah. "The hosts will soon be routed and turn their backs in flight" declared the Prophet. Before sunset on the 17th of Ramadhan 2AH, al-Mujeeb, our Lord, our Allah, had answered the prayers of His humble servant, and the battle which presented defeating odds to Muslims was won in a matter of hours. Not only was Islam saved from extinction, but also this battle placed fear at the heart of opponents (2, 3).

Absolute conviction in God comes through the absolute belief that Allah listens to prayers (Sami ud Dua) and that He answers our prayers (Mujeeb ud dua). While most of us believe that God exists, not all have the high conviction that is needed to reach the level of absolute belief. That is the level where the belief of a person cannot be shaken, no

matter the situation. No darkness can overpower the light of belief, and no wind can blow out the flame of belief.

It was this same belief that Hazrat Noah (as) possessed. When the waters in a barren valley began to climb, he boarded the boat together with a handful of believers to survive the storm and certain death.

It is this belief towards which Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as) has consistently drawn our attention. "It has been decreed by God Almighty that prayer yields great power." Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) reminds us "God has informed me time and again that whatever will transpire, will happen through prayers" (4).

It is the belief that only Allah has control over all things that ultimately leads to the utmost level of success in prayer. A faith-inspiring incident from the early days of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community demonstrates the completeness of this belief.

A boy by the name of Abdul Kareem had come to Qadian from Hyderabad-Dakan for religious education. His mother had a profound fondness for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and wanted her son to learn of faith. Unfortunately, he was bitten by a dog and contracted rabies. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) started praying for the boy and sent him for the best available treatment to a specialist hospital in Kasaulee. He returned after apparently successful treatment, however, after a short while re-developed symptoms of Hydrophobia. The hospital was contacted again, and their response was: "Sorry, nothing can be done for Abdul Kareem."

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) felt a special connection towards the child, as he had traveled far from home for the sake of education in Qadian. He turned towards Allah with full conviction that Allah has full control over everything that He desires. The mighty sign of Allah's power was observed, and the prayers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) answered when Abdul Kareem was completely cured of the disease and lived a long, healthy life (5).

The life of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), like that of his master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa), is full of incidents related to prayers which were miraculously accepted by as-Sami and answered in the most amazing manner by our al-Mujeeb Allah.

THE PROMISED MESSIAH Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as)



The relationship of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) with Allah was so strong that at times it negated the need for formal prayer! During the time of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), there was a very small, but extremely sincere Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Kapurthala. This small community was exceedingly devoted to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), who had a great love for them as well. Some opponents of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community took possession of the Ahmadi Muslim Mosque and denied access to the Ahmadi Muslims. A civil suit was filed. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Kapurthala was very anxious and repeatedly appealed to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) for prayer in this matter. Touched by the distress of his devoted disciples, he remarked: "If I am truthful (in my claim), this mosque will come to you."

The judge, however, continued to display an adverse attitude towards the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and did not intend to restore the mosque to their rightful owners. On the day he was to read the judgment, he was struck down with a fatal heart attack. The case passed on to another judge, who, upon examining the case, found the facts overwhelmingly in favor of the Ahmadi Muslims and restored the mosque to them (6).

“A personal relationship with Allah.”

It is a phrase that you have heard many times; in Friday sermons, in books and even during speeches. Many would say it captures the very heart of what it means to be a believer. When Hazrat Krishan (as) was asked about how to get closer to God, he guided his followers towards prayers, “know Bhagwan through prayers” (7).

Many of us know that a God exists; but only a few have truly developed a personal relationship with Him; a relationship that they nurture regularly. The question is: how can we build a personal relationship with God.

God is close; He is waiting for us to deepen our relationship with Him. He knows our apprehensions. “And assuredly, We have created man, and We know what his physical self whispers to him, and We are nearer to him than even his jugular vein” (8).

Think of it this way. If you are married, how did you get to know your spouse? Perhaps you had heard of him / her before you met, or possibly someone introduced you. Whatever the situation, at first, you only knew that he / she existed; you did not know the person. Then you met him / her, and thereafter committed your life to them in marriage. When you spent time together, your relationship grew, and it became even deeper over time. Now, you not only believe that your spouse exists, but you also have a close personal relationship with that person who was

once a stranger.

This is how it is with God. Yes, you believe He exists, and that is good. But it is only the first step. He invites you to discover who He is and how much He loves you. You can learn of His love through the Holy Qur'an. You can learn of His love through the life of the Holy Prophet (sa), the life of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) and you can see His love in your own life. As you progress through the journey of finding God, you will move from observing the reality that He is, to experience the reality that is God. And as Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) has taught us, the only way to be certain about God is through prayers. It is only when you pray, and your prayers come to fruition, that your faith will strengthen and reach an absolute level.

He is Allah – al Mujeeb. “His are the most beautiful names...” “When you call upon Allah, He will answer. He will save you from fatal traps and will deliver you from lethal plagues. He will take you under His wing and protect you from the terror that darkness brings. You have but conform to His will, be just, be dedicated, be kind, and be faithful (9).

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As-Salam: The Source of Peace

Tooba Khokhar

**"I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils" (1)**

I still remember encountering this poem for the first time, as many of us will have done, in age, its poet deems "apparelled in celestial light, the glory and freshness of a dream," that is to say, childhood. Nature, the unchanging backdrop to the rituals of life, is where so many of our greatest loves and desires, are often played out.

In the Persian tradition too, the lover is symbolized by a nightingale and the beloved by a rose. But such affection is tinged in sadness for the rose's beauty is as quick to fade as it is to bloom. The nightingale whose sweet melody resounds joyfully in Spring is despondent in Winter. The question that arises then is this: is beauty that fades beauty at all? What comfort can we attain from an object that will pass and in a moment be no more?

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) of Qadian, has an answer for this cosmic riddle. There is a lot of comforts to be attained, he counsels, because the attraction we feel for forms of beauty is an attraction towards the Divine. Such love is "a reflection of that very love" (2).

Thus, any experience of beauty, momentary though it may be, is always a source of peace. Indeed, it is in this connection the Holy Qur'an states that:

"He, it is Who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they might add faith to their faith, and to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is All-knowing, Wise" (3).

Many are the ways in which God causes our hearts to blossom and be at ease, whether in the beauty of the rose or daffodil, the burst of a cool, gentle breeze, or the multifarious other ways we experience Divine comfort.

This comfort and tranquillity are emanating from the

Divine Attribute of as-Salam the Bestower of Peace. All true peace stems from God. Therefore the seeds for such peace must be planted deep within the human soul, in a relationship with its Maker.

In the Holy Qur'an, we read that "Allah calls to the abode of peace" (4). God as the Source of Peace, "wishes security for His Creation" (5). And in all the verses of His revealed book, He sets out a blueprint for achieving this peace in the domain of the home, in society and in the world at large.

It has been said of religion that it is the "opium of the masses." Indeed, outwardly devotion not to mention corrupt institutions may well be likened to a drug that gives momentary pleasure and lasting decay. However, could true connection with the qualities of mercy, generosity, and godliness give cause to anything but lasting peace?

To be sure, they are, if anything, the true enablers of peace. Until we reach that stage; however, we can make sweet our time by seeking peace in the glimpse afforded by the rose and daffodil into the shoreless ocean of the beauty of the Divine.

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As-Salam: The Source of Peace

Mubasher Ahmad

"He is Allah, and there is no God beside Him, the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace, the Bestower of Security, the Protector, the Almighty, the Subduer, and the Exalted. Holy is Allah, far above anything they associate with Him as His partners" (1).

The above verse of the Holy Qur'an mentions His name, as-Salam, along with other Beautiful Names of Allah. Elaborating on Allah's name of as-Salam, the Promised Messiah (as) writes in The Philosophy of the Teaching of Islam:

"He is the Source of Peace, that is to say, He is the God who is fully safeguarded against all imperfections, afflictions, and hardships. Not only that, He provides peace and security for all. This meaning is obvious that if He had been afflicted with misfortunes, or was to be killed by people, and He was to be frustrated in His designs, then on seeing such bad examples how the hearts could be satisfied that such a God would surely deliver them from misfortunes?" (2)

As explained by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), God, as-Salam, is safeguarded fully against all imperfections, afflictions, and hardships; He is completely secure from harm or suffering. However, some world religions, both ancient and modern, make a compromise with God being fully safeguarded and being above pain or suffering.

For example, in India, there is the worship of some Hindu gods and goddesses who were either killed by others or themselves committed suicide. Such is the goddess Chin-namasta, who is depicted standing with her severed head in one hand and a sword with which she cut it off in the other hand, and jets of blood spurting out of her bleeding neck.

Similarly, another Hindu god by the name of Aravan is worshipped in some parts of India. He committed suicide as self-sacrifice to win the favor of the famous and terrible Hindu goddess named Kali.



According to Aztec faith traditions, to provide sustenance to the universe, the gods of the Mayans of South America sacrificed themselves by self-immolation, thus helping humanity to survive and enjoy the pleasures of life. The stars, the moon, the sun, the earth, and the crops were all sustained, according to Aztec religious belief, because the gods were sacrificing their flesh and blood continuously for the sake of human nourishment. Therefore, human sacrifice became a part of their religious tradition as repayment of the debt owed to their gods for their sacrifices.

In Christianity, to save humanity from the punishment of the 'original sin' committed by Adam and Eve, it is believed that God Himself took the form of a man to suffer death for the sake of humanity. He was inflicted with every kind of physical pain and torture. He was arrested, beaten, nailed to a wooden cross, thirsted for water and, Christians believe, bled to death.

In Islam, in contrast with all such concepts where God is neither secure from harm, nor at peace with Himself, Allah is *as-Salam* - He is above and beyond all weaknesses, afflictions, sufferings and self-imposed injuries and death. As stated at the outset, He is fully safeguarded and secure, and He is the Source of Peace and Security for humanity. It is humanity that needs peace and security through Him.

We know that maintaining peace has always been a great challenge for humanity throughout history, but perhaps sustaining peace has never been as crucial as it is at present. Currently, mankind seems to be in full rebellion against God. Sinfulness and atheism are on the rise everywhere. Our peace, peace of mind and heart, is also disturbed through constant fear, distress, and anxiety in our daily lives. And unfortunately, the world at large is engaged in numerous bloody conflicts: the danger of a disastrous global nuclear war that can annihilate a vast number of people and devastate a major portion of our natural environment is looming as a real threat.

Without any doubt, this tremendous loss of peace in every shape and form is due to one major factor: humanity is disconnected from Allah, *as-Salam* - the real Source and the Reservoir of Peace. Breaking away from *as-Salam* brings disturbance and destruction on mankind.



There is no peace because the personal connection with God - Who is the Fountainhead of Peace- is broken. There is no peace because the commandments of God, *as-Salam*, are being ignored. There is no peace because the personal example set by the Messenger of Allah (sa) is not being followed on how to live a righteous and peaceful life. There is no peace because the world at large has not yet accepted the teachings of the Promised Messiah (as) who was sent by Allah, *as-Salam*, to eliminate violence and conflicts that cause bloodshed. There is no peace because humanity is still unwilling to accept the sacred system of Khilafat, which was established by Allah, *as-Salam*, to bring about peace at home, in society and at national and international levels.

Allah, the Exalted has given the name "Islam" to the way of life that He commands us to adopt. "Surely, the true religion with Allah is Islam" (3).

The very name 'Islam' means peace and security attained by surrendering one's ego to the Will of God. To be a 'Muslim' one cannot imagine any other way but to yield completely to the Will of God, and to give up all self-centered desires by resisting all temptation.

To establish peace on earth, Allah, *as-Salam*, commands the most comprehensive teaching:

"Verily Allah commands you to act with Justice, to confer benefits upon others, and to do good to others as one does to one's close blood-relatives and forbids evil which pertains to your own selves, and evil which affects others, and prohibits revolt against lawful authority. He warns you that you may remain mindful" (4).

Allah, *as-Salam*, says in the Holy Qur'an: "He who killed a person - unless it be for a murder or for creating disorder in the land - it shall be as if he killed all mankind; and whoso saved a life it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind" (5).

Allah, *as-Salam*, makes it abundantly clear that He does not love those who create lawlessness, disorder, and violence in society: "Whenever they kindle a fire of war, Allah extinguishes it; and they strive to create disorder in the earth, and Allah loves not those who create disorder" (6).



Allah, *as-Salam*, makes it abundantly clear to us that once peace and security are established, then they should not be disturbed, and the Source of Peace should always be fully relied on: "And create not disorder in the earth after it has been set in order and call upon Him in fear and hope. Surely, the mercy of Allah is close to those who do good" (7).

Also, Allah, *as-Salam*, instructs us that family members, neighbors, employees, travelers, and even strangers should be provided with the utmost care and security. The elderly, widows, orphans, the disabled, poor and needy should be provided all necessary financial and emotional help. These commands and teachings emanating from Allah, *as-Salam*, lay the foundations of a peaceful society on the firm ground of justice, benevolence, mutual love, respect for human life, respect for law and order, and selfless services rendered to others.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) made it obligatory for all men and women who choose to accept him as the Promised Messiah, to follow the ten conditions of Bai'at as part of their code of life.

A pledge is included in Condition IV: "That under the impulse of any passion, he/she shall not cause any harm whatsoever to the creatures of Allah in general, and Mus-

lims in particular, neither by his/her tongue nor by his/her hands nor by any other means."

Condition VII states: "That he/she shall entirely give up pride and vanity, and shall pass all his/her life in lowliness, humbleness, cheerfulness, forbearance, and meekness"

And Condition IX requires: "That he/she shall keep himself/herself occupied in the service of Allah's creatures, for His sake only, and shall endeavor to benefit mankind to the best of his/her God-given abilities and powers."

What could be a better foundation for enduring peace than sincerely adopting these conditions and molding our lives accordingly?

The Khulafa (Successors) of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) has continued to guide his followers on peaceful living, and how to resolve issues of conflict. Under their guidance, the members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community have learned how to remain patient and steadfast under all kinds of persecution and extreme atrocities inflicted upon them by their opponents.

At times of international crisis, the Ahmadiyya Khulafa (plural of Khalifa) have always forewarned Heads of States and political leadership of the world to take necessary steps to avert the possibility of war. Recently, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masih V (aba), advised the political leaders of USA, Britain, Israel, and Iran to take concrete steps to avoid war in the Middle East which can spill over and become World War III. He also addressed the European Parliament in Brussels on December 6, 2012, calling for universal peace. Thus, the office of Khilafat Ahmadiyya is fully engaged in a continuous process of promoting and maintaining peace in the world (8).

Similarly, interfaith peace may be achieved and maintained, as explained by the Promised Messiah (as) in his last book "Paigham-e-Sulh" (A Message of Peace) by a better understanding of one another's faiths. This can be accomplished through respectful and productive dialogue, by looking for virtues in others, by bringing commonalities to light, by understanding that all religions were initiated by none other than Allah, *as-Salam*, to establish peace, that is, to establish Islam, on the earth.

More than ever, we must pray for our political leaders and policymakers to stay away from the paths that may lead to

destructive wars. Wars never solve problems; they only increase human suffering, pain, starvation, and bring loss of countless lives!

Once we have these fundamentals in place, only then can we hope that our end will be in peace, and we will be accepted by Allah, as-Salam, and He will have us in His presence – in His Paradise on this earth and in the Hereafter – in peace and full security: “Verily, the right be placed amid gardens and fountains. Enter therein with peace and security” (9).

May Allah grant us all the ability to become deserving of Allah, *as-Salam's* pleasure, so that we may hear the most blessed greeting of peace emanating from the Source of Peace Himself: “Peace – a word of greeting from the Merciful Lord” (10).



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Al-Hayy: The Living

Amtul Kafi Yadullah Bhunnoo

“Allah — there is no God but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining. Slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep. To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that will intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He pleases. His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the care of them burdens Him not; and He is the High, the Great” (1).

Al-Hayy, the Living, is an attribute of Allah derived from the verb form of Hayy – ‘he lived,’ or ‘he had life.’ This attribute signifies that Allah is the only Being Who is deathless and lives by Himself without any support. He is Eternal and Everlasting. To understand this attribute, first, understand life on Earth. If you are a believer of the Big Bang theory, the most important point regarding God as the Eternal and Everlasting Living Being is that even when there was nothing, there was still God. Where did space, the particles, dust, the elements, originate, without which the Big Bang could not start? God is still Living today, was always there when there was nothing, and will continue to Be there even if life in the universe ceases to exist.

The God of Islam, as mentioned earlier, is Eternal and Everlasting. God does not have any subordinate gods as are found in Hinduism. He is an Independent Being. God does not need to come down to Earth to speak to His servants, and He does not require a son, much less a son to be ‘sacrificed’ for a message to be delivered to His creation, as the Christians believe. He reveals His teaching through His chosen messengers who live and breathe the example set by God for man to follow.

So what does a living God do? He speaks to His servants today as He always has. He watches over His servants today as He always has; He helps His servants today as He always has, and He is ever-Living. We, His creation, behave as if we will never die; however, this quality of being unperishable is only for God.

Where is this Living God?

“To Allah belong the East and the West; so, wherever you turn, there will be the face of Allah. Surely, Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing” (2).

A Living God who is the ultimate living being and a giver of life must be present everywhere in every shape and form of life. All life depends on one thing or another to survive; water in all forms need space; pathogens and non-pathogens, bacteria, fungi, viruses, and parasites are also dependent on their environment. For example, plants need healthy soil, many animals need these plants to survive, and humans need all the nutrients from both plants and animals to survive and live a healthy balanced life. This is why we should not kill any animal unnecessarily; we should look after our environment and be sustainable. Whenever man has tried to disrespect nature, nature has fought back. This is because God does not allow man to push the limits of his being; that is, He has not given the right or freedom to man to act or to be like God.

The Holy Qur’an states: “Certainly, the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of mankind; but most men know not” (3).

God has created a law for His creation to follow; all living things follow it, and cannot change their course. However, man is the only being that needs a written law to live life; without it, man retains the ability and tendency to act like other animals, or worse.

Throughout the evolution of humanity, many laws have come and gone per the need and requirement of the time and according to the phase of humanity. Since man has used many methods of recording history, some like to choose the laws or path that were more suitable to a previous era, perhaps a long time ago. However, the best path that leads to a living God is not found anywhere except through Islam. Islam is the only path that meets the requirements for man to live a truly fulfilled life here and now and till the end of time. As God says:

“This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favor upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion” (4).

Indeed, all paths lead to God, but there are some that lead to a dead-end through years of corruption and insertion of obstructions by those who tread them. Islam is the only path that remains fresh and without any corruption or obstacle between man and God.

How does the living God communicate with His creation? God can communicate through any means but most commonly, He communicates through the written word, that is, the Holy Scriptures such as the Bible, the Torah, the Qur’an, or through His acceptance of prayers, or through His Prophets who are sent to reveal the law, or to revive previously revealed laws.

This is why it is important to understand that when some Muslims say that there will be no Prophet after the Prophet Muhammad (sa), they actually deny this attribute of the Living God, implying that He has stopped communication with the man in one of His most important ways! God, Himself says in the Holy Qur’an:

“And We send not the Messengers but as bearers of glad tidings and as Warners” (5).

To say that the Living God is not communicating using this means is, in fact, saying that He is now limited, which is against the attributes of God and also implies God’s demise, or refusal to speak to humanity. This may be likened to parents teaching a child, they will keep on teaching him a lesson here and there but will not expect him to follow it all the time, or suddenly, without warning. Sometimes, a child forgets and needs reminders; since we are all from God, He will constantly remind us about our purpose and obligations through His messengers.

God says: “And nothing hinders people from believing when the guidance comes to them, and from asking forgiveness of their Lord, except that they wait that there should happen to them the precedent of the ancients or that punishment should come upon them face to face” (6). God requires us to find out for ourselves whether something is true or not instead of relying on others. If we can search and to read to acquire knowledge, we should do that. In this digital age, it is easier to find information ourselves, instead of relying on others such as so-called

“religious scholars” or on hearsay via social media. It is easy to concoct and to spread misinformation and hearsay: enemies of Islam abuse social media and other online platforms in their attempts to pollute the path to finding the Living God. However, the path of Islam cannot be polluted as it is shielded by the blessings of Prophethood, and of Khilafat, through which all means of corruption are invalidated; the Fifth Khalifa of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as) and current Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) constantly reminds us:

“We, Ahmadi Muslims, undoubtedly, are constantly witnessing the miracles of God. For example, there have been many occasions where doctors have given up all hope and said a patient was certain to die, yet when Ahmadis bowed down before their Lord and beseeched His Mercy, it led to people being cured and restored to health. When such cases occur, it invariably leaves doctors astounded, and they admit that the recovery was a genuine miracle. In this sense, we have a firm belief in the miracles of God, and so this is the Living God that Islam presents. It is this concept of Mercifulness that is the reason we have been saved from any doubt in our faith in God. By answering our prayers, it is God who Himself strengthens our faith and belief in His existence” (7).

God says: “In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding; Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth: “Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain; nay, Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire” (8).

The signs of *Al-Hayy*, the Living God, are visible via all our senses, but we need to focus on Him and not be distracted by the world so that we strive to learn more about Who He is, where He is, and what He wants from us. The Living God is waiting for us to notice Him and to take the path to Islam to start communicating with Him in earnest.

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Al-Hakeem: The Wise, The Creator With A Purpose

Zia H. Shah, MD

Let me start by saying, if my articles are boring to you, it may be that you need to read more of them, as was suggested by John Cage, who was a famous American composer of the twentieth century, "If something is boring after two minutes, try it for four. If still boring, then eight. Then sixteen. Then thirty-two. Eventually, one discovers that it is not boring at all" (1).

Our universe is not a chaotic or an indiscernible creation of a whimsical Creator. No, not at all. "We have created the heavens and the earth and all that is between the two," says Allah, "in accordance with requirements of truth and wisdom" (2).

The creation of the universe was not a frivolous pursuit. "We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between the two in sport." Says Allah in the Qur'an, "Had We wished to find a pastime, We would surely have found it in that which is with Us, if at all We would have been inclined in that way" (3).

For the universe to come into being, it required at least ten raised to the power of five hundred parameters to be set right for the universe to come out biophilic for the existence of human species — what a marvelous feat of creation by All-Knowing, All-Powerful and All-Wise God. I did not fabricate this unimaginably large number of ten raised to the power of five hundred. This is the number of universes that the scientists are proposing in the multiverse to explain the biophilic nature of our universe, in what is called multiverse theory or M theory. Of course God does not have any physical hands, and He works through the laws of nature. Nevertheless, any reasonable person, unless strongly driven by an ideology of atheism, when he faces such odds and examines the complexity, elegance, and beauty of the universe, sees the hand of an infinite All-Wise God under the surface.

No wonder Allah says: "And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in accordance with the requirements of wisdom and the Truth, and the day He says, 'Be!', it will be. His word is indeed the Truth" (4).



To describe the M theory, I take you to Stephen Hawking's 2010 book that he had co-authored with Leonard Mlodinow. The title of the book is 'The Grand Design.' In this book, the authors have described their agnostic or atheistic world view, through the glasses of contemporary physics. However, the title itself is a Freudian slip revealing the underlying conflict of Hawking's premise. He cannot express his proposition, even briefly so, without borrowing a phrase that argues the exact opposite and suggests a Designer, a Creator, a First cause, Alpha and Omega! The authors do not offer us any new evidence to prove their premise. The book repackages commonly known scientific information.

Nowhere in the book have the authors told us what could science have discovered that would have proved a Transcendent God; in other words, their conclusion is in fact, only their starting premise.

The multiverse theory or the M. Theory is used to rescue

the sinking ship of atheism and is invoked in one form or the other in concluding paragraphs of almost every chapter of this book, after the fifth one. The multiverse theory, however, may belong to science fiction rather than science as we do not have access to multiverse to examine it through scientific methods. Hawking teaches us in the final paragraphs of the fifth chapter that the M theory allows for ten raised to the power 500 different universes, together represented with the term multiverse, each universe with its laws, to explain the biophilic nature of our universe. For additional reading about multiverse theory, please read my article, 'Ten Raised to Five Hundred Reasons for Our Gracious God,' online (5).

The Divine attribute of al-Hakeem, the Wise is mentioned at least fifty times in the Holy Qur'an. The verse that links the creation of the universe with this attribute is, "He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him. He is the Mighty, the Most Wise" (6). The Most Wise has not only based the creation on sound reproducible principles but has also made them predictable and discernible by human nature.

Three physicists born in Britain but now working in the United States were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2016 for research into the bizarre properties of matter in extreme states, including superconductors, superfluids, and thin magnetic films.

David J. Thouless of the University of Washington was awarded half of the prize of 8 million Swedish kronor, or about \$930,000, while F. Duncan M. Haldane of Princeton University and J. Michael Kosterlitz of Brown University shared the other half.

The scientists relied on advanced mathematical models to study "theoretical discoveries of topological phase transitions and topological phases of matter," in the words of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm (7). Mathematics somehow magically has the power to predict and allow the discovery of the natural phenomena.

The universe is an amazing creation that is discernible and is open to scientific inquiry. "Most of what will be said on these questions will not be new;" wrote Eugene Wigner, Nobel Laureate in Physics, 1963, in an article, 'The



Eugene Wigner, Nobel Prize in Physics 1963

Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences,' "it has probably occurred to most scientists in one form or another. My principal aim is to illuminate it from several sides. The first point is that the enormous usefulness of mathematics in the natural sciences is something bordering on the mysterious and that there is no rational explanation for it. Second, it is just this uncanny usefulness of mathematical concepts that raises the question of the uniqueness of our physical theories" (8). God made our universe biophilic, He based it on mathematical principles, as He willed the creation of multiverse into being, through modulation of some ten raised to the power of five hundred variables. Then some four billion years ago, He started orchestrating various forms of life into existence, through the process of evolution and caused millions of species on our planet earth, with Homo sapiens being at the apex of His creation. Al-Hakeem and the All-Wise God chose not to be like an absent landlord, but in His supreme wisdom decided to guide humanity through a long series of prophets, until His message climaxed in the Holy Qur'an.

In the Qur'an, Allah argues from the physical to the moral, from the tangible to the intangible: "Do they not look at the camels, how they are created? And the firmament how it is raised high? And at the mountains, how they are set up? And the earth, how it is spread out? Then continue to admonish for you are but an admonisher; you have no authority to compel them" (9). Again we read in Surah ar-Rahman: "And the firmament has He raised high and He set up the balance. That you may not transgress in balance and justice, so weigh all things with fairness and fall not short of the measure" (10).

The teachings of Allah given in His final scripture are full of wisdom and of utilitarian value for us. Majority of the references in the Qur'an to His attribute al-Hakeem are more than fifty as mentioned before, are in this context. The Quranic teachings of family value and chastity are essential for the survival and flourishing of our families and human societies. The Quranic ideals have guaranteed religious freedom for all in the domain of man's relation to God and appropriate legislation to manage the domain of human interaction, man's relation to man. It has also guided us how to not fall victim to the evils of alcoholism and gambling, among scores of other beneficial teachings, about marriage, divorce, and inheritance, to name a few. In the Muslim Times we have collected several articles to document the utilitarian benefit of the Quranic teachings (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21).

Al-Hakeem, the most Wise not only created the universe on the principles of truth and wisdom but has frequently mentioned the elegance of His first creation as a proof for human accountability and the second creation or hereafter (22). From the elegance of His creation, flow the wisdom of His teachings and then the ultimate consummation of human life, when we meet our Creator in the Hereafter.

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Al-Wali: The Friend

Khalida Jamilah

"Allah is the friend of those who believe: He brings them out of every kind of darkness into light" (1).

Allah is the Islamic name for God. In Arabic, this name applies solely to One Supreme Being. Islam teaches belief in the absolute unity of God, meaning there is only One Creator, hence, Allah is never used in the plural. According to the Holy Qur'an the purpose of creation is to worship Allah, to fulfill the rights of Allah (such as performing worship properly), and to follow all His commandments (2). Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an teaches believers to fulfill the rights of His creation. By knowing the attributes of Allah, one can derive abundant spiritual pleasure from one's worship of Allah. This article examines the meaning of al-Wali; presents proof of acceptance of prayer and existence of God; and, lastly, it presents several ways on how to become a friend of Allah.

Al-Wali is one the Divine attributes and has several meanings, such as: helper, supporter, benefactor, and friend (3). Allah promises in the Holy Qur'an, "Allah is the Friend of those who believe: He brings them out of every kind of darkness into light." (4). The phrase "those who believe" signifies those people who fulfill the rights towards their Creator in order to gain His closeness. They fall down prostrate and are not proud. At every moment of their life, they call on their Lord in fear and hope.

The following three stories are proof of how Allah becomes the Protector and true Friend of believers. It is a sign God exists and answers sincere prayer. The sources requested to withhold their names due to privacy. They are members of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Indonesia and in the United States of America.

"Behold! The friends of Allah shall certainly have no fear, nor shall they grieve" (5).

The first story is from a mother. She narrated that when she was pregnant with her third child, her placenta tore which resulted in the baby being unable to get nutrition in the womb. The movement of the baby became weaker

and painful. She continued to check with the midwife and there appeared to be no abnormalities. Finally, she gave birth at eight months and was referred to the hospital for Caesarean delivery due to hypertension. The baby was born but did not cry. She said, "I glanced at the baby and he was very small and pale. I thought my baby had died. At that time all the doctors handling me were focused on my premature baby." The mother suffered from excessive bleeding and nearly lost her life.

The mother stated, "I survived and came home from the hospital while my baby had to stay there. In order to see my baby, I had to visit hospital every day. Finally, I had no more money, and I was forced to ask for my child to come home. I decided that if he must die let him pass away in my arms."

"When we arrived at home at 3.00 p.m., everything went smoothly until 3.00 a.m. My husband performed voluntary night prayer while I examined our baby every hour. When I checked our baby at 3.00 a.m., it turned out that my baby was not breathing,"

"I frantically wanted to take him to the hospital but it was not possible because of the cost. So, I tried to give C.P.R, I pressed our baby's chest while crying and kept saying, 'Let's take a breath, wake up, dear. Let's fight for life, let's fulfill your promise as a Waqf-e-Nau child (life-devotee)'. I continued to pray as much as I could."

"My husband completed his prayer and came to me while weeping, and reassured me, 'Oh God! God who hears our prayers, please bring back our baby to life.' With Divine power, our baby breathed again. Now he is nine years old and healthy and happy. Alhamdulillah (All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Universe)!" (6)

"And sufficient is Allah as a Friend, and sufficient is Allah as a Helper" (7).

The second personal account was also from a mother, a member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Indone-

sia. She lived in a village. She gave birth to her second child and everything was fine. However, the day after, she felt immense pain in her stomach. She tried every remedy from traditional and homeopathic medicine to the most bitter herbal remedies. She then turned to Allah, and beseeched His mercy.

"O my Lord, You are the Healer, You are the Merciful, the Listener! Please grant me speedy recovery so I may raise my baby with love and compassion," the mother wept. An Ahmadi Muslim missionary advised her to recite prayers from the Holy Qur'an, and prayers of the Promised Messiah (as).

On the twenty-fifth night, she saw a dream. She saw her aunt, who told the mother to eat a young cassava plant so she would be relieved from all disease and the pain she was experiencing. She woke up and immediately asked her husband to find the young cassava plant. Unfortunately, it was too difficult to find it. She prayed again and she saw a dream in which her aunt told her to find the plant in the eastern part of the village. She also told the mother in detail how to prepare the plant to eat by cleaning the soil off and then washing and lastly peeling the skin. She finally found the cassava with her cousin helping her. She did exactly what her aunt told her. She ate a quarter part and she felt a need to go to bathroom. Subsequently, she felt relief and all of the pain was gone. This narration proves that Allah Alone is her Helper. Allah guided her through a true dream. This is a sign that Allah is the Living God and He listens to a sincere prayer from a mother who was willing to sacrifice her life for the well-being of her child (8).

"Your friend is only Allah. (9)"

Finally, the last part of this article presents several ways to become Allah's friend and how to pray properly. Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba), the current worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, explained in a Friday Sermon that "in time of need we should turn to God in the first instance then make arrangements" (10). Another method is to purify one's heart, for instance, reciting, "I seek forgiveness from Allah" in a meaningful way while truly contemplating our shortcomings. This can be done at any time.

In this digital age, finding a true friend and having meaningful friendship are difficult because people tend to feel more comfortable in their own privacy or with a virtual 'friend'. This is the time to ask: who is my true friend?

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, states: "God is Independent and Besought of all; He does not need anyone to be friends with Him. It is man who benefits from this friendship with Allah, and what a friend to have! One who never abandons His loved one in this world or in the next and Who forgives his shortcomings" (11).

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An-Nur: The Light

Seher Bhatti

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba), Khalifatul-Masih V, delivered a sermon on the attribute of **An-Nur** starting with a Qur'anic verse from Surah al-Baqarah, verse 258: "Allah is the friend of those who believe, He brings them out of every kind of darkness into light. And those who disbelieve, their friends are the transgressors who bring them out of light into every kind of darkness. These are the inmates of the Fire; therein shall they abide" (1).

This expression, '...He brings them out of every kind of darkness into light'... means to guide one to success and happiness physically as well as spiritually. Just as this expression '...who bring them out of light into every kind of darkness...' means the opposite.

But what does it mean to understand Nur, meaning Light? Nur is physical as well as spiritual light; neither can be seen without having the equipment to perceive it. If you want to think of physical light you can imagine being in space with your back to the sun looking away from it. The light will be all around you, but you will not be able to see its rays. It will appear completely dark until you raise your hand to let the rays strike it and reflect your eyes. Or, you can turn around and look at the source of light, the sun (although looking directly at the sun is not recommended for eye health)

Allah likens His Nur in a beautiful way in Surah An-Nur. To perceive His Nur, you need a promontory, (the physical eye socket), upon or within which is a lamp (the eyeball). The lamp is enclosed in a globe, and the globe is glowing with such brilliance as of a bright star. It suggests that to see Allah's light (both physically and spiritually), you will need the agency of an instrument to perceive it.

The enemy of the Prophet Muhammad (sa), Abu Jahl, could not perceive it whereas many around him did. Right to the last breath, he believed he was in the right and Muhammad (sa) was wrong. The case of Abu Jahl was like a blind man; a blind man on earth cannot perceive light whereas the sighted ones can. In both instances, there has got to be light to perceive it. Light is all around

you, and ultimately if you cannot see it then it is because you are spiritually blind. This is the mercy of Allah that He allows us to see Him through Light. The verse from An-Nur goes into a wider explanation:

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a lustrous niche, wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a glittering star. It is lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would well-nigh glow forth even though fire touched it not. Light upon light! Allah guides to His light whomsoever He will. And Allah sets forth parables to men, and Allah knows all things full well" (2).

To summarize, the verse is a metaphor referring to three inanimate objects: a lamp, a glass or globe, and a niche (an elevated place). Divine Light is said to remain in these three objects which, when combined, exude a brightness that is complete and perfect in every way. The lamp is the light source, the globe of glass acting as a cover to offer protection for the light from the wind so as not to be extinguished and therefore increase in brightness, and the niche is to preserve the light and give it direction. When speaking spiritually of these three things the verse suggests its equivalence to the lamp being Divine Light, the glass being God's Prophets who protect that Light from being extinguished and add to its brightness, and the niche referring to the successors of the Prophets who spread the Divine Light and give it direction and purpose for guidance. We can also interpret the verse to refer to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) as he has been spoken of as the light in the Qur'an. In this case, the niche would equal the heart of the Prophet Muhammad (sa), the lamp signifying his most pure and untainted nature endowed with the best and noblest attributes and qualities. The glass or globe is the Divine Light which comprises his nature and is invested as clear and bright as crystal. When the light of Heavenly revelation comes down upon the light of the Prophet Muhammad's (sa) pure nature, it shines with a two-fold effulgence which the Holy Qur'an describes as "lights upon lights." Oil from a blessed tree

kept this light going, meaning that his light was not just bright and brilliant but plentiful, firm and everlasting, and was intended to illumine both the East and the West. He was blessed with an extremely pure heart and his nature was so full of noble qualities that he was almost eligible to carry out the duties of his great mission even before the light of Divine revelation had come down upon him. We can also take this metaphor and relate it to the human body. Our body contains a spirit which makes itself apparent through our organs, so the human body acts as a niche and protects the light, namely the spirit. The human body can be seen to inhabit the lamp of the soul, bringing to light the human mind and bringing it a guidance to get in touch with God. The human brain plays the part of the lamp, protecting it from harm and enhances its light. In this respect regarding its perfect mechanism, some philosophers have taken to the belief that the brain is the source of divine light. The oil from the blessed tree supports the light, that is to say from the basic and external truths which do not belong to any people of the East or West. The reference in the verse of nur belonging neither to the east nor the west signifies the teaching of Islam which does not incline to any one side. Neither to Communism, nor Socialism, nor Capitalism. Rather, it is a teaching of moderation which establishes human rights and world peace.

In Ruhani Khazain, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) states:

“That light of high degree that was bestowed on perfect man was not in the angels, was not in the stars, was not in the moon, was not in the sun, was not in the oceans and the rivers, was not in rubies or emeralds, or sapphires, or pearls; in short, it was not in any earthly or heavenly object. It was only in the perfect man whose highest and loftiest, and most perfect example was our lord and master, the Chief of the Prophets, the Chief of all living ones, Muhammad, the chosen one, peace be on him. That light was bestowed on this man and, according to their ranks, upon all those who bore the same color to some degree. This dignity was found in its highest and most perfect form in our lord and master and our guide, the immaculate Prophet, the righteous one, testified to by the righteous, Muhammad, the chosen one, peace be on him” (3).

In this age, God sent Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) with the light of spirituality that descends from the Heav-

ens, although he writes that he did not know what act of his had attracted such Divine honor. He only knew of his natural tendency towards God due to his compelling sincerity. It is said that he once dreamed of an esteemed, elderly individual who motioned for him to replicate the Sunnah of Prophets of God and observe fasts. He resolved to do so. He fasted in secret, moving to an outward, secluded part of the house. He would eat there and would distribute most of his food among orphans, eating very little himself. Through the wonders of such fasting, exquisite visions were revealed to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) where he met with past Prophets of God and high-ranking saints.

This blessing was bestowed on Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) because of his perfect obedience to the Holy Prophet (sa). Not only had God instilled Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) with the Light that was first sent down 1,400 years ago, but He also granted him the ideal position to spread this Light. It is the way of God that when He graces someone with Nur, He makes it apparent to the world. When the worldly light has the potential to spread, the Light of God cannot stay hidden.

By following the exemplary characters of Prophet Muhammad (sa) and Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), we can also be blessed with this Nur (Light) and never be deprived of it. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) taught us that our strength lies within our unity, and as our Khalifat-ul-Masih says, by understanding this reality others would not dare to create an uproar against Islam.

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poetry

CORNER

THANKS FOR ALLAH'S BENEFICENCE

*O Allah, Maker of things, Concealer of faults, All-Powerful;
O my Dear, my Benefactor, my Sustainer!*

*How should I thank You, O Bestower of Great Favors?
Where can I find the tongue to express my gratitude?*

*It is entirely Your grace and favor that You have chosen me;
Otherwise, there was no shortage of humble servants in Your court.*

*Those who vowed friendship turned into enemies;
But You did not abandon me, O Fulfiller of all my needs.*

*O my Unique Friend, O Refuge of my life,
You are sufficient for me; I cannot do anything without You.*

*But for Your grace, I would have long been reduced to dust;
Then Allah knows where this dust would have scattered.*

*May my heart and soul and very being be sacrificed in Your way!
I know of none who loves like You;*

*Since the beginning, I have been brought up under the blessed shadow of Your protection;
Like a suckling was I nursed by You.*

*In no son of man have I found the fidelity that You have;
Nor have I come across, apart from You, any compassionate friend.*

*People say that the unworthy are not accepted;
But despite being unworthy, I have been granted acceptance in Your court.*

*So numerous are Your favors and bounties bestowed upon me;
They will remain uncountable till the Day of Judgement.*

Reference:

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as),
(Burahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Part 5, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 21, p. 127)



NEWS, VIEWS, '& REVIEWS

The Guardian

As the wildfire of hate speech spreads, fighting it must be a job for everybody



Addressing hate speech does not mean limiting freedom of speech. To prevent it from escalating, we need to treat it as we treat every malicious act.

Around the world, hate is on the march. A menacing wave of intolerance and hate-based violence is targeting worshippers of many faiths across the globe. Sadly – and disturbingly – such vicious incidents are becoming all too familiar.

In recent months, we have seen Jews murdered in synagogues, their gravestones defaced with swastikas; Muslims gunned down in mosques, their religious sites vandalized; Christians killed at prayer, their churches torched.

Beyond these horrific attacks, increasingly loathsome rhetoric is being aimed not only at religious groups but also minorities, migrants, refugees, women and any

also minorities, migrants, refugees, women and any so-called “other”.

As the wildfire of hate spreads, social media is being exploited for bigotry. Neo-Nazi and white supremacist movements are growing. And incendiary rhetoric is being weaponized for political gain.

Hate is moving into the mainstream in liberal democracies and authoritarian regimes alike – and casting a shadow over our common humanity.

The United Nations has a long history of mobilizing the world against hatred of all kinds through wide-ranging action to defend human rights and advance the rule of law.

Indeed, the very identity and establishment of the organization are rooted in the nightmare that ensues when virulent hatred is left unopposed for too long.

We recognize hate speech as an attack on tolerance, inclusion, diversity and the very essence of our human rights norms and principles.

More broadly, it undermines social cohesion, erodes shared values, and can lay the foundation for violence, setting back the cause of peace, stability, sustainable development and human dignity.

In recent decades, hate speech has been a precursor to atrocity crimes, including genocide, from Rwanda to Bosnia to Cambodia.

I fear that the world is reaching another acute moment in battling the demon of hate.

That is why I have launched two United Nations initiatives in response.

First, I have just unveiled a strategy and plan of action on hate speech to coordinate efforts across the whole UN system, addressing the root causes and making our response more effective.

Second, we are developing an action plan for the UN to be fully engaged in efforts to support safeguard religious sites and ensure the safety of houses of worship.

To those who insist on using fear to divide communities, we must say: diversity is a richness, never a threat.

A deep and sustained spirit of mutual respect and receptivity can transcend posts and tweets fired off in a split second. We must never forget, after all, that each of us is an “other” to someone, somewhere. There can be no illusion of safety when hate is widespread.

As part of one humanity, it is our duty to look after each other.

Of course, all action aimed at addressing and confronting hate speech must be consistent with fundamental human rights.

Addressing hate speech does not mean limiting or prohibiting freedom of speech. It means keeping hate speech from escalating into something more dangerous, particularly incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence, which is prohibited under international law.

We need to treat hate speech as we treat every malicious act: by condemning it, refusing to amplify it, countering it with the truth, and encouraging the perpetrators to change their behavior.

Now is the time to step up to stamp out antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, persecution of Christians and all other forms of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Governments, civil society, the private sector and the media all have important roles to play. Political and religious leaders have a special responsibility to promote peaceful coexistence.

Hatred is a danger to everyone – and so fighting it must be a job for everyone.

Together we can put out the wildfire of hate and uphold the values that bind us together as a single human family.

HUFFPOST

More Presidential Candidates Are Visiting Mosques Than Ever Before

Prior to the 2020 election, presidential candidates rarely — if ever — visited a mosque on the campaign trail. But that’s changing



By Rowaida Abdelaziz

The day before he appeared onstage at Wednesday’s Democratic presidential debate, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee visited the Islamic Center of Detroit to discuss the concerns of Muslim Americans.

The roundtable, attended by imams, activists, nonprofit leaders and other community members, lasted about an hour. The group discussed Inslee’s promise to dismantle the Muslim ban, his climate change agenda, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Inslee, who was the first governor to condemn President Donald Trump’s ban on travelers from several majority-Muslim countries and challenge it in court, told HuffPost he visited the mosque to recognize “the real fear and anxiety” endured by Muslims under the Trump administration.

"We have a very dangerous person in the White House," he said, calling Trump someone who tries "to inflame anger and fear and hatred in the United States against the Muslim community."

Inslee is not the only candidate courting the Muslim vote. He joins a number of 2020 Democratic presidential candidates who have campaigned in Muslim communities around the country.

In the past, and especially in the post-9/11 era, candidates feared a backlash if they did. Both as a candidate and then as president, Barack Obama had to grapple with rumors of being Muslim as if that were a bad thing. In addition, Muslims have been a small slice of the electorate, even now making up just 1% of the U.S. population.

Before 2016, Muslim voter turnout also tended to be low, with minimal overall civic engagement between Muslims and elected officials. But after the rise of Trump and the election of the most diverse congressional class ever in 2018, including the nation's first two Muslim congresswomen, Democrats have pivoted to embracing marginalized communities in a more formal way.

Candidates like Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont have hired Muslims for high-level positions, while others like Inslee have constantly reminded voters of the discrimination enshrined in Islamophobic policies like the Muslim ban. At Wednesday night's debate, Inslee was the first candidate to bring up the ban, calling the President a white nationalist.

Shahed Amanullah, a former adviser in the Obama administration who worked under both Hillary Clinton and John Kerry, described the Democratic relationship with Muslims as a constant "push and pull."

"Either Muslims were the avatar to be demonized and be used to drum up votes on the other side," or, Amanullah said, "Muslims were the symbol of resistance, the canary in the coal mine."

"It's weird to be part of a demographic group that is a presidential campaign issue. But that's the world we live in now," he added.

Neither Obama nor Hillary Clinton visited a mosque

during the race for the Democratic nomination in 2008. Obama didn't visit a mosque until his eighth and final year in the White House, when he spoke to Muslims at the Islamic Society of Baltimore in 2016. During the last Democratic primary, Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley visited a mosque in Sterling, Virginia, in 2015.

Although Trump has not visited any mosques as a candidate or as president, other Republicans have in the past. In 2001, President George W. Bush visited the Islamic Center of Washington a few days after the 9/11 attacks in an attempt to discourage the sudden wave of hate crimes against Muslims. More recently, in 2015, Republican Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona visited a mosque in an attempt to repair the GOP's relationship with Muslims after then-candidate Trump called for a "complete shutdown" of Muslims entering the U.S.

Zaki Barzinji, who served as White House liaison to Muslim-American communities during the Obama administration, applauded the increase in candidates visiting mosques during the runup to 2020.

"Any attention is good attention for the community, is my perspective," said Barzinji. "We need to figure out how to leverage that attention and shape it in a way that leads to substantive representation of our community."

Barzinji, who is also on the board of the Muslim Public Affairs Council, pointed to new political participation figures as one of the reasons Democrats are going out of their way to host town halls with Muslim Americans.

In the last few years alone, Muslim engagement has skyrocketed. 2018 marked the blue Muslim wave, where nearly 100 American Muslims, almost all Democrats, ran for public office in the face of Islamophobic campaigns from opponents who consistently targeted candidates for their faith and identity.

Muslim turnout in four crucial swing states in particular Michigan, Florida, Ohio and Virginia, each with a significant Muslim population jumped 25 percentage points from 2014 to the 2018 midterm elections.

Like Amanullah, Barzinji said the election of Trump has thrust Muslims into the spotlight, but that there is arguably a silver lining: increasingly diverse campaign staffs

who are ensuring their candidates take notice.

"In the climate that we're in since Trump came to office, there's been such a rush to embrace marginalized communities, Muslims being one of those marginalized communities, and so our voices have been elevated and our issues have been elevated," said Barzinji.

But even though the majority of Muslim voters are registered Democrats, many are wary of Democratic leadership for not taking a strong stance against Islamophobia, and for using their communities as proxies to tackle issues of national security and terrorism.

Just last week, Muslim organizers shared their grave disappointment with the 2020 Democratic candidates when many of them brushed off a historic gathering of Muslim Americans in politics. Only New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio attended the Washington, D.C., event in person. Inslee, along with Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, spoke to the participants via livestream, while Sanders sent a prerecorded video.

Sanders, however, has been applauded by Muslim voters for his consistent outreach to their community. In 2015, Sanders participated in an interfaith roundtable at Masjid Muhammad in Washington, D.C., where he condemned anti-Muslim rhetoric used by his GOP counterparts during his run for the Democratic nomination against Clinton. During her race against Trump in the general election, Clinton took a softer approach when she expanded her team, notably consulting her longtime aide Huma Abedin, who is Muslim, to develop stronger Muslim outreach.

After announcing his second run for president, Sanders hired Faiz Shakir, the first Muslim American to manage a major presidential campaign. Sanders has also repeatedly and swiftly come out in support of Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.), one of the first Muslim women elected to Congress, each time she was attacked by Trump and the GOP and Muslim voters took notice.

In March, Sanders also became the highest-ranking American official and the first U.S. presidential candidate to visit a mosque in the immediate aftermath of the mosque massacre in New Zealand. The next month, Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii visited a mosque near Des Moines, Iowa. During the Islamic month of Ramadan this past May, South Bend,

Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg followed suit when he visited a mosque in his home state.

Amanullah said he embraced candidates adding mosques to their list of campaign stops, but with caution and a healthy amount of skepticism. Prior to the election of Trump, Democrats had a convenient relationship with Muslims, but after 2016, Muslims went from being a faith community to what he calls a "political football."

"I truly do appreciate it," Amanullah said of the new attention. "But is it coming from a place of you really care for our community? Or is it coming from a place of we're the best club to beat Trump with?"

The Guardian



'Historic' day as India outlaws 'triple talaq' Islamic instant divorce

Minister says women now have justice but Muslim groups accuse Hindu-led government of community interference

Tue 30 Jul 2019 21:28 EDT

India's parliament has approved a bill outlawing the centuries-old right of a Muslim man to instantly divorce his wife, drawing accusations of government interference in a community matter.

Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist administration has

been pushing to criminalize “triple talaq”, under which a man can divorce by uttering the word “talaq”, meaning divorce in Arabic, three times in his wife’s presence. Following Tuesday’s upper house vote it now only requires the signature of the president – considered a formality – to become law.

The lower house backed the bill, which will make anyone practicing instant divorce liable to prosecution, last week. India is one of the few countries where the practice has survived in law. It was declared “unconstitutional” by the supreme court two years ago.

“This is a historic day, the injustice that was going on with Muslim women, India’s parliament has given them justice,” law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said in Delhi. Some Indian Muslim groups have said triple talaq is wrong, but believe the practice should be reviewed by community leaders rather than the government.

Asaduddin Owaisi, an MP from the opposition All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen party, said the BJP failed to reform Hindu society and was instead targeting Muslims. Critics have long accused the BJP of a bias against minority Muslims. The BJP denies the allegation but says it is opposed to the appeasement of any community.



Saudi Arabia and Russia among 37 states backing China's Xinjiang policy

By Tom Miles. World News

GENEVA (Reuters) - Saudi Arabia, Russia and 35 other states have written to the United Nations supporting China’s policies in its western region of Xinjiang, according to a copy of the letter seen by Reuters on Friday, in contrast to strong Western criticism.

China has been accused of detaining a million Muslims and persecuting ethnic Uighurs in Xinjiang, and 22



ambassadors signed a letter to the U.N. Human Rights Council this week criticizing its policies.

But the letter supporting China commended what it called China’s remarkable achievements in the field of human rights.

“Faced with the grave challenge of terrorism and extremism, China has undertaken a series of counter-terrorism and deradicalization measures in Xinjiang, including setting up vocational education and training centers,” the letter said.

The letter said security had returned to Xinjiang and the fundamental human rights of people of all ethnic groups there had been safeguarded. It added there had been no terrorist attack there for three years and people enjoyed a stronger sense of happiness, fulfillment and security.

As well as Saudi Arabia and Russia, the letter was signed by ambassadors from many African countries, North Korea, Venezuela, Cuba, Belarus, Myanmar, the Philippines, Syria, Pakistan, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Muslim Sunrise Vol. XIV, First Quarter, 1942, No. 1

Islamic Conception of God

Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masih II,
Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

Islam describes God as a Perfect Being, possessing every excellence. The opening verse of the Holy Quran runs:

“All praise is due to Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of all the worlds.” As God has created all things, and all things depend on him for their sustenance. He alone deserves all praise for the beauties and excellences to be found in difference things, for all these beauties and excellences are derived from God. The beauty of a scene, the charm of a voice, the fragrance of a flower, the softness of a bed, the daintiness of a dish, in short, the beauty and charm of all that pleases and appeals to the senses of man, is created and bestowed by God.

The verse then proceeds: “ar-Rahman, ar-Rahim,” i.e., God has, out of his pure Grace and Bounty, created all those things the need of which was to be felt by man; for instance, lights and air; fire and water; different kinds of food and medicines; timber, iron, stones, etc. He has created so many things for the use and research of man, that whichever way he turns he finds enough to occupy his attention and is afforded countless opportunities of improving and perfecting his knowledge and capacities. In fact, man cannot possibly feel any need which has not been met and provided before his birth. All this has been done under God’s attribute of Rahmaniyyat.

Again, He has been called “Raheem” in the Holy Quran, that is to say, He rewards all labor and effort according to its deserts. Man’s efforts is never wasted, and he is ever rewarded in due proportion to its merits.

Again, He is called “Malik-i-Yaun-id-Din,” i.e., He is the Master of the Day of Retribution. In other words, apart from the operation of the laws of Nature, and the rewards or punishments which are meted out contemporaneously, He has fixed the limits of every action, and as soon as those limits are reached, final judgement is passed on each action

whereby the good are rewarded, and the evil ones are punished, subject always to this, that under His attribute of “Malikiyyat” it is always open to Him to forgive and to remit the punishment.

Again, He is called “Qadeer,” that is to say, He has fixed the nature and properties of all things, for if this had not been so, there would have been constant confusion and disorder in the world and the affairs of the world would have come to an end. If men had not been certain about the nature, effect, and properties of things, they could never have undertaken any work, not knowing what results it might lead to. For instance, a man who desires to cook food lights a fire in the certain belief that fire would produce heat. If the production of heat had not been the fixed property of fire, and the extinguishing of fire had not been the fixed property of water, if fire had sometimes produced heat and at other times had caused cold, if water had sometimes extinguished fire and at other times had set it alight, nobody could have derived any benefit from them, and men would have lost heart in despair and would eventually have perished.

Similarly, God has been described as “Aleem,” that is to say, He has knowledge of a secret as well as of manifest things. He is aware of the secrets of a man’s heart and knows all hidden things. He is acquainted with the hidden secrets of man’s nature of which the latter is not even himself aware. Things buried under the earth and those placed on mountain tops are equally within His knowledge. He knows that which is past and that which is to come.

He is “Samee,” that is, He hears everything; the slightest whisper does not escape Him and the sound of a crawling ant, and of the blood coursing through a man’s veins reaches Him.

- He is “Hayy,” that is, He is Himself alive and bestows life on others.

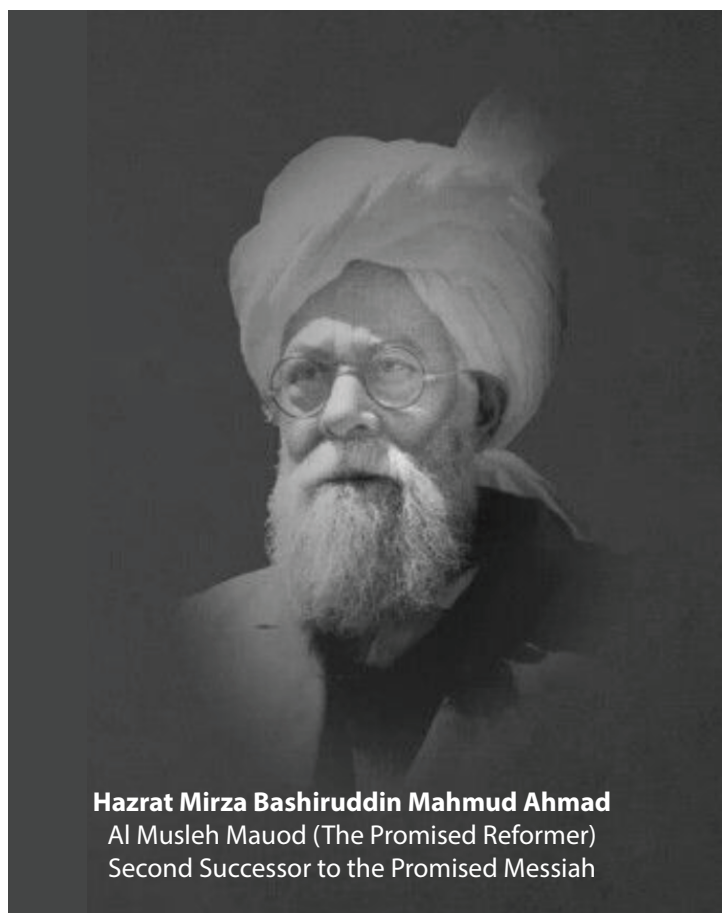
- He is "Khaliq," the Creator.
- He is "Qayyum," that is, He supports the existence of others.
- He is "Samad," that is, nothing can exist without His support and assistance.
- He is "Ghafur," that is, He forgives our trespasses.
- He is "Qahhar," that is, all things are subject to His power.
- He is "Jabbar," that is, He remedies all ills and disorders.
- He is "Wahhab," that is, He bestows favors and bounties on his creatures.
- He is "Subbuh," that is, He is free from all defects.
- He is "Quddus," that is, He comprises in Himself all kinds of purity and holiness.
- He does not sleep, nor is He fatigued. He is Eternal and Ever-existing.
- He is "Muhaimin," that is, He guards all things. It is under the working of this Divine attribute that man is guarded from evils and sufferings, of the approach of which he may not even be aware. He is very often saved from a disease or a calamity by secret influences which have been working in his favor. As soon as a disease attacks the human system, counter influences begin to destroy germs of the disease. So long as a man does not persist in acting rashly and breaking the laws of nature, he is saved from many of the evil consequences of his conduct. God says in the Holy Quran: If God were to start punishing men for all their irregularities of conduct not one of them would have been spared (XVI, 61).

In short, God possesses all perfect attributes and His mercy encompasses all things, as He says "My mercy encompasseth all things." In other words, His attributes of anger and punishment are governed by His attributes of mercy.

He is "Ahad," that is, nothing is His equal. He is "Wahid," that is, all things had their origin in His command and He is the first cause of all creation. Many other attributes of His are mentioned in the Holy Quran, which show that Islam teaches a perfect conception of God as possessing attributes which create love on the one hand and fear on the other, both of which are indispensable for a perfect relationship between man and God.

Every sensible person will realize that perfect unity and perfect obedience can be produced only either by love or

by fear. No doubt, love is the higher and the more perfect relationship, but there is equally no doubt that some natures are affected by nothings but fear. A religion, therefore, which does not emphasize the Divine attributes both of mercy and of punishment can never be universally beneficial. In considering the sources of human conduct, a religion must have regard, not only to the motives which influence the higher classes of people, but to the motives governing the actions of all classes and conditions of men. In fact, the higher classes of people are generally naturally inclined towards good, and the greater part of our attention must be devoted to those who have fallen low and have wholly forgotten their duties as human beings. This class of people, with rare exceptions, is amenable only to fear, and no moral or spiritual reform can be effected in this class unless it is attended with prospect of loss or harm. A religion which claims to bring all mankind in direct relationship with God, must, therefore, have regard to this characteristic of human nature. In describing the attributes of God, Islam has so balanced the different attributes that no more perfect combination would be imagined which could attract and control the different natures of men. The attributes both of Love and Anger have been emphasized, subject to his assurance, "My Mercy encompass all things," that is, that Mercy overcomes Anger, for the object of the latter is to reform and not to inflict pain.



Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad
Al Musleh Mauud (The Promised Reformer)
Second Successor to the Promised Messiah



Questions & Answers

Does Allah Belong to you?

Our paradise is in our God. Our highest delight is in our God for we have seen Him and found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth procuring even though one may have to lay down one's life to procure it. This ruby is worth purchasing though one may have to lose one's self to acquire it. O ye who are bereft, run to this fountain and it will save you. What shall I do, and by what drum shall I make the announcement that this is your God, so that people might hear? What remedy shall I apply to their ears so that they should listen. If you belong to Allah, rest assured that Allah will indeed belong to you.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Ruhani Khazain Vol. 19: Kashti Nuh, Pp. 21-22

Who is Allah the Almighty?

The Holy Qur'an teaches us that, by virtue of all His excellences, God is One and has no partner. He suffers from no shortcoming. He comprehends all perfect attributes and manifests all holy powers. He is the Originator of all creation and Source of all grace. He is the Lord of reward and punishment, and everything returns to Him. He is near despite being far, and is distant despite His proximity. He is above everything, but we cannot say that there is anyone below Him. He is the most Hidden, but it cannot be said that anything is more manifest than He is. He is Self-Existent and everything subsists because of Him. He sustains everything but nothing sustains Him. Nothing has come into being or sustains itself without Him. He encompasses everything, but we do not know in what way. He is the Light of everything in heaven and earth. Every light shine through Him and every light is a reflection of His Being. He is the Lord of the universe, there is not a soul that is not sustained by Him, and not a soul that exists by itself. No soul possesses any power that has not granted by Him.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), Lecture Lahore, Islam International Publications Limited, English Edition (New Translation): UK, 2008, Pp. 8-9

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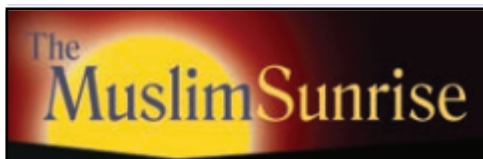
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